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# WHAT ABOUT THE NEW THEOLOGY?

BY

W. L. WALKER

AUTHOR OF
"THE SPIRIT AND THE INCARNATION" "THE CROSS AND THE KINGDOM"
"CHRISTIAN THEISM AND A SPIRITUAL MONISM" ETC.

SECOND EDITION

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## PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

I AM thankful for the spirit in which this book has been received even by representatives of "The New Theology." The chapters on "Divine Immanence and Transcendence" have been specially recognised as helpful. In one criticism it is asked, Why insist on the *personal* presence of God in Christ? Why not be content to say that "the fulness of the Spirit" dwelt in Him? But the fulness of the Spirit means *the fulness of God*, in that ethical quality of His Being in which His Personality is grounded. It is just because there was in Him such a perfect openness to and oneness with God in His essential ethical Being that we have in Christ, and (account for it as we may), in Christ alone, *God* as truly and as fully (within human limits) as we have *man*; and for its complete explanation we are carried back to the Eternal.

Adverse criticism has been chiefly directed towards the representation of "the Atonement."



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The treatment of this great subject was necessarily brief. I have dealt with it more fully, from Christ's own view of it, in *The Cross and the Kingdom*, and, from Paul's standpoint, in *The Spirit and the Incarnation*, and in an article in *The Expositor* for March 1906. In the hope of meeting some difficulties I have, in this edition, added a little to what is said concerning the Cross, especially in the closing chapter.

W. L. W.

"FERNIHIRST," SHETTLESTON,
GLASGOW, *August* 1907.

## PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

Perhaps no apology is needed for this book. I was asked to write it, but I was ready to do so, although it is not pleasant to have to controvert the views of a brother for whom I have the high regard that I entertain for Mr. Campbell. I am far from being unsympathetic with the attempt he has made to give us a New Theology, and we must not be too hard on him even if we think he has erred greatly with respect to some most important matters. Urged by similar motives, the present writer some twenty years ago went even further than Mr. Campbell in some directions, although not so far in others. But he became able in time to work his way back to the evangelical faith without any sacrifice of truth or consistency.

Ministers and others are often suspected of just saying what they are obliged or expected to say, owing to their position. Let me mention, therefore, that, while glad to be recognised as a Congregational Minister, I have always sought to follow and speak that which I believed to be

the truth, sometimes at considerable cost to myself. I have no creed to uphold, no church to please, no position to maintain,—nothing to do but to express the convictions which have been formed during many years of constant thought given to these problems, and of some experience of the practical working of more than one form of religious belief.

I have sought to be just as plain and outspoken as Mr. Campbell is, but I hope that not a single unkind or unchristian word has been written. I know that there are other representatives of "the New Theology" who speak for themselves, but, as it has been impossible to notice all shades of opinion, I have confined myself to Mr. Campbell's statements. My endeavour has been to be positive as well as critical, and I have concluded with a brief statement of what I think we can intelligently believe to-day.

W. L. W.

"Fernihirst," Shettleston,
Glasgow, *May* 1907.

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# CHAPTER I

# DO WE NEED A NEW THEOLOGY?

## CHAPTER I

### DO WE NEED A NEW THEOLOGY?

THERE is certainly a very widespread feeling that a New Theology is needed. Perhaps, however, what is really required is rather a re-statement of the Old Theology. Theology is a formulated statement of our beliefs concerning God in His relation to the world and ourselves. In order to be true, it must rest upon *facts*. We only know God as He manifests Himself. The Old Theology is based on what are believed to be the facts of the Divine manifestation in the world and in Jesus Christ. If anything has occurred to warrant disbelief in these facts, or if some wholly new aspects of the Divine manifestation have come to light, we should need a New Theology — just as when the old Ptolemaic conception of the universe was proved to be false, a new Science of Nature was necessary.

But here be it said that Christianity does not depend on Theology. Christianity assumes

a Divine Source of our being and a Divine ideal for it, a life which we may know ourselves to be meant to realise, and which we yet fail to rise to. The consequence of our failure is inward discord, and disharmony with the whole and with the Divine source of our life. When fully awake to it, the sense of discord and disharmony may become very painful. Christianity comes as the means of raising us into our true life, of removing the discord between our souls and God and the whole. Men found in experience that it actually did this. Hence it is known as "the religion of Redemption," or of *Salvation.* It is the experience of salvation through Jesus Christ that is the foundation of Christianity as an accepted religion. Its apostles went forth preaching salvation to men in the name of Jesus Christ. Men, accepting the faith, experienced salvation. Theology arises out of the facts involved in this experience. Apart from bringing to men the experience of salvation (first to the individual, and then, through individuals, to the world at large in every aspect of its life), Christianity is of no practical value, and we need not concern ourselves with its Theology.

Of course, it is always interesting to speculate concerning the source of our being, the meaning of life, and our ultimate Destiny: the human mind can never cease to do so. But Christianity

brings the answer to these questions in a practical way — a way that attests itself by its ability to meet our actual needs, to give us that inner rest and fuller life we crave for, and deliverance from the sin and selfishness that curse the world.

Have any of the basal facts of the Old Theology been shown to be false? Not that we are aware of. What has happened is that the mode of viewing some of these facts has become changed for many of us. While the idea of God remains unchanged we have been led to certain new conceptions of His relation to the world and of His mode of working therein. Certain beliefs associated with the great central facts of Christianity can no longer be held in the same form. Some things that were deemed certain are now felt to be open to question. We feel that there is need to distinguish between the things that we *know*, and those concerning which we cannot be absolutely certain.

During the nineteenth century science itself was compelled to drop certain beliefs concerning the world which were universally held in the days of Copernicus and Newton. The doctrine of evolution has changed our whole outlook on the universe. But it has not been necessary to formulate an entirely new science; only to

modify the old so as to take up into it the new conception. No more does the doctrine of evolution, with the widened view of the universe, and of the unceasing process of development which it brings us, necessitate a *New* Theology. The Old Theology can be so modified as to take up into it the new conception without affecting any of its central or basal facts.

Again, the criticism that was first applied to ancient history has in the last century been increasingly applied to the Scriptures, and as a result we are compelled to regard the Bible in a new light. We can no longer go straightway to anything that happens to be within the boards of the book, and quote it authoritatively as "the word of God." We know that, not only has the Bible had a history, but that all that is in it has necessarily come through *man*, and has therefore a human side, which may be found to be in some respects mistaken. But the word of *God* was never, and never could be, anything else than *the word of Truth*; and to be thrown back on the question, not merely of what is written but of what is *true*, ought to be no loss to any man. Moreover, doubt has not been cast on any one of these great *facts* of Scripture which are the foundation-stones of the Old Theology.

Once more, the growth of knowledge and

of more humane sentiments (which are surely the more God-like) has rendered incredible certain beliefs for long associated with the Old Theology: such as the creation of man solely for "God's glory," the arbitrary selection of some to eternal life and the reprobation of others to eternal damnation, the doom of eternal damnation itself as one of hopeless irremediable torment after all the sufferings of the earthly life, the resurrection of the very flesh that filled the grave, the literal coming of Christ on the clouds of heaven, the scenic representation of the last judgment. Such beliefs have become simply impossible for many, in the old form at least, even though they should be formally professed.

The same increase of knowledge and growth of human sentiment have made it impossible to rest satisfied with any Theology which seems to represent God as essentially at variance with His human children, as regarding them in wrath merely, watching to mark their sins, and waiting to condemn them. Nor can we be content with a religion which thinks of the other world merely, or even chiefly, and leaves the conditions of human life in this present world untouched. We cannot believe that justice and social equity are to be wholly relegated to a world to come, or that the only salvation that

men need is one from what threatens them beyond the grave. There is a new sense of the solidarity of mankind (of all life, indeed), and of equality of man as man, which we cannot but regard as Divinely inspired.

But nothing in all this is contrary to, or in any way affects, the basal facts of the Old Theology. What these are will come out in the course of our discussion better, perhaps, than in any formal statement of them. They rest on facts of Divine manifestation and of human experience, and we repeat that we know of nothing that has touched them in the least degree.

At the same time, we not only grant, but urge, that we need such a *re-statement* of Christian Theology as shall make it more intelligible, as shall commend it to the reason and consciences of men to-day, as shall direct it to its proper ends with respect to both the individual and society. In our criticism of the New Theology this need will be kept constantly in view, and we shall conclude by an attempt to give a brief statement of what can be accepted to-day as a positive faith.

## CHAPTER II

# DOES THE NEW THEOLOGY MEET THE NEED?

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## DOES THE NEW THEOLOGY MEET THE NEED?

With the best of motives, the minister of the City Temple has come forward with such a Theology as he believes is adapted to meet the present need. However much we may differ from him, we cannot but admire his courage and ability. His action has created a much needed interest in matters of religion, the outcome of which is bound to be good. We are not to turn away from it, even if it be *new*. Christianity itself was once very new, greatly opposed and looked down upon by the ecclesiastical authorities of the day. The sole question ought to be, Is it *true*? The apostle bids us "despise not prophesyings," lest we quench the Holy Spirit of Truth, but "prove all things, hold fast that which is good, and reject all that appears to be evil." It is in this spirit that we desire to consider this "New Theology."

In his opening chapter Mr. Campbell says

much that is true. But we cannot help believing that he caricatures the preaching that is heard in our churches, taken as a whole. The present writer holds no brief for the churches, and there is much in our ecclesiastical systems that is far from the Christian ideal, but surely the preaching of to-day, as a whole, is at least *intended* to touch human life. There may be many indifferent persons attending our churches as a mere matter of form—the more shame to them—but whatever may be true of "the average man," it is surely not true that the average church-goer looks upon "the propositions he has been taught to regard as a full and perfect statement of Christianity," as having "little or nothing to do with his everyday experience"; certainly it is not true as regards many who belong to our churches.

But one cannot fail to sympathise with Mr. Campbell's aim to "give a re-statement of the essential truth of the Christian religion in terms of the modern mind," to provide "a driving force which will enable the churches to fulfil their true mission of saving the world; or, to put it better still—to bring mankind back to real living faith in God and the spiritual meaning of life"; or, as elsewhere, "to bring in the Kingdom of God." This is just what is wanted. But is the New Theology fitted to do this

much needed work? One thing must be acknowledged at the outset,—Mr. Campbell sees what is wanted to make religion more effective in its social bearing, and has made a brave endeavour to get at it. For personal religion also, it is certainly the realisation of our true relation to God as He is revealed in Christ, and as His Spirit is moving within us, that is the great desideratum. If the New Theology can help us more fully to this it will be the means of reviving religion amongst us. But this is just what it fails to do. The present writer was startled and surprised by Mr. Campbell's earlier utterances as they were reported in the newspapers; he could scarcely believe that they meant what they seemed to say, and he waited for the appearance of Mr. Campbell's book before forming any decided opinion concerning this Theology. He took up the volume with every desire to put a favourable construction on what so stimulating and helpful a preacher as Mr. Campbell has been might really have to say after reflection, and with that regard for him personally which all who have come into personal contact with him have been led to entertain. But failure and disappointment to no ordinary degree have to be confessed.

It seemed impossible to distinguish his earlier

utterances, as reported, from present-day Unitarianism. Mr. Campbell, however, earnestly repudiates the identification of his teaching with that most unpopular system, which has been upheld by many most earnest and self-sacrificing men. "It is not a surrender to Unitarianism," yet he acknowledges that present-day Unitarianism is preaching with fervour and clearness the foundation truth of the New Theology, the fundamental unity of God and man. There is not, therefore, the same dividing line between them as that which Mr. Campbell declares to exist between the popular Evangelism and the New Theology.

Mr. Campbell is not a Unitarian. He believes in the Trinity, and in the Divinity of Jesus, although not in His Deity in the strict sense of the term. No special exception need be taken to the distinction as he states it. But there are expressions in his book, now widely familiar, such as "Jesus was God, but so are we," that tend to make the meaning of the assertion of even "the Divinity" of Christ somewhat uncertain to the ordinary reader.

The unique Incarnation of God in Christ is affirmed, and, while the physical miracle is rejected, the fact itself is said to be a spiritual effect. But it is by no means made clear how

the humanity of this one man became fitted to be that *special* manifestation of God, and "last word" concerning Him, that He is declared to have been. Why also, we cannot but ask,—although the question applies not so much to Mr. Campbell as to some others who have spoken in the name of the New Theology,—why should there be any hesitation to affirm the moral perfection, or *sinlessness*, of Christ if He is really held to be Divine? To associate sin with God, or with one who was as truly Divine as human, would surely be monstrous.

These matters are thus briefly referred to here, because they are not to be made the burden of our criticism. They are meant as a warning from one who "has been there," and they imply nothing disrespectful to Unitarianism, however far we are obliged to depart from it.

The importance of the subjects dealt with by the New Theology, not merely intellectually but as they affect the spiritual well-being and salvation of men, and so also the purpose of God in His creation, and of Christ in His sacrifice of Himself for our sakes, compels one to lay aside all personal feeling and desire to say pleasant things, and to speak with entire honesty and straightforwardness with respect

to the system which Mr. Campbell has placed before us. To speak quite plainly indeed, we must say that, while there is much in his book that is true and deserving of attention, and much that indicates far greater capacity for dealing with "the deep things of God" than Mr. Campbell has always received credit for, what he has placed before us is so full of inconsistencies and contradictions that it cannot be called "a system," and so based on an unethical conception of God that it cannot be regarded as a *Theology.*

# CHAPTER III

# THE CONCEPTION OF GOD

## CHAPTER III

## THE CONCEPTION OF GOD

THE radical error of the New Theology is an underlying unethical (non-moral) conception of God, or at least the want of a thoroughly ethical conception of the Source of our being, consistently maintained throughout. Not that Mr. Campbell *means* to give an unethical conception of God, or that God is nowhere ethically conceived—this is one of its many inconsistencies, but none the less there is an unethical, imperfect conception of God underlying the whole system, and it is this that vitiates it as a Theology. This appears in many ways. Every man, even Haeckel and the "blankest materialist," is said to believe in God. But *what* is the God that such men can be said to believe in? Certainly only a mere Power, unethically conceived. "When I say God," says Mr. Campbell, "I mean the mysterious Power which is finding expression in the universe, and which is present in every tiniest atom of the

wondrous whole." But he will tell us immediately that this is *not* God, that *God* is much more than that. "The real God is the God expressed in the universe, and in yourself"—"He is myself." True in one sense, but most untrue in another. He himself will tell us ere long that God is not *yet* expressed in the universe as a whole.

To answer the question, why there is a universe, our author goes back to ancient Eastern theosophy and affirms the universe to be "one means to the self-realisation of the Infinite." How can an all-perfect, infinite Being possibly need so to *realise* Himself? As such He is, and must be in Himself, the primordial Reality. A God who needs, in this sense, to realise Himself—in order, Mr. Campbell says, to know what is in Himself—is no God at all: we are only using a *word* when we call Him God. The illustrations which are given from *finite* beings are quite beside the mark.

In order to realise Himself, we are told, He must *limit* Himself. But how could He limit Himself unless He previously existed in complete unlimited form? There come thus to be, we are told, "two modes of God—the infinite, perfect, unconditioned, primordial being, and the finite, imperfect, conditioned,

and limited being, of which we are ourselves expressions." There is a great truth underlying this statement; but it is only in this limited, imperfect, finite form that God is in the world; it is only of this limited, imperfect form that we are to any extent the expression. "It is with the immanent God we have to do," says Mr. Campbell, but by his own confession this is *not* really God as He is in His perfect Being; therefore it is not really *God* at all.

Similarly, the universe is said to be "the vehicle of the self-expression of God," while yet God is affirmed to "be infinitely more than the universe." "I start," says Mr. Campbell, "with the assumption that the universe is God's thought about Himself"; "the highest of all selves, the ultimate self of the universe is God"; "my God is my deeper self, and yours too"; "the whole cosmic process is one long incarnation and uprising of the being of God from itself to itself." The spirit in us (as distinguished from the soul) is at once our being and God's. This was true of Jesus, therefore it is true of all. "When our finite consciousness ceases, there will be no distinction whatever between ours and God's." In all this there is a strange obliviousness of that ethical perfection which is the distinctive quality of God, and which has

been affirmed by Mr. Campbell to characterise the Divine Being. If the world, as it has existed in the past, and as we know it to-day, be a part of God's thought of Himself, or of God's self-expression, or progressive Incarnation of Himself, then we must say that it is a very unsatisfactory and a most unethical conception of God that it gives us. If the spirit that has animated many men be really the Divine Spirit, we cease to marvel at the devil-worshippers of India. Of course, *they* naturally adopt such worship, but we ought to know better than to attempt to base Christian Theology on what is practically Hindu philosophy, and, indeed, that which has given rise to all kinds of idolatry. Mr. Campbell himself says that "a crocodile is a much less true expression of God than General Booth." But can a crocodile be said to be an expression of *God* at all? We know that the ancient Egyptians thought so, and worshipped the crocodile along with the cat, the bull, and other animals. But we thought we had really left such ideas for ever behind us.

The world, while in one aspect it manifests God, has in another aspect often been in direct opposition to the God it points to. As Dante said when asked whence he derived the ideas

for his Inferno: "I found the origin of my hell in the world I lived in." Surely there must be entire forgetfulness of both the history of the earth and of man before it can be said that the universe is the self-expression of God, or God's thought of Himself. To Christian thought the world is *not* God's self-expression, but only the *gradual* progressive expression of His *creative* thought—of the Divine Reason and Will, fundamentally one with the Divine Love, *hindered* and *opposed* by the separate self which is necessary to constitute man in the image of God, or to give him permanent value in the creation. In its fulness, of course, the thought of God in His creation cannot be less than that of Himself, realised in the essential truth of His being in finite forms. But to say this—to affirm that the world is the scene of the self-realisation of God as He goes out from Himself to become the principle of its life—is a very different thing from saying that the world is "the self-expression of God." The Divine thought can only be progressively realised or expressed. The world, at any stage of its history *till we come to Christ*, is imperfect at the best. Only when we come to Him who could truly say "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" can we behold the self-expression of God in the world. And it is only as that is in some degree reached

by us that God gains anything like adequate self-expression in the world. Why else all the earnest endeavour of the New Theology to conform men to Christ, and to make the world the Kingdom of God? If the world is throughout the Divine self-expression, or God's thought about Himself, such endeavours on our part must seem impertinent, and are in any case quite uncalled for. Logically, we should ultimately experience the same paralysis of thought and action which a similar conception of the relation of God to the world has produced in India. Whether this mode of thought is rightly described as Pantheism need not be argued. Mr. Campbell disclaims Pantheism, and we are sure that he means what he says.

The universe is said to be "a Divine experiment without risk of failure." How there can be an *experiment* with no risk of failure is difficult to see. But if it be such, why should we, any more than God, "bother" about it.

Here we must point out the influence of that unethical conception of God we have referred to in the way in which Mr. Campbell speaks of the relation of God to that which to the Christian mind is *sin*.

"According to the received phraseology, this God is greatly bothered and thwarted by

what men have been doing throughout the few millenniums of human existence. He takes the whole thing very seriously, and thinks about nothing else than getting wayward humanity into line again. To this end He has adopted various expedients, the chief of which was the sending of His only-begotten Son to suffer and die in order that He might be free to forgive the trouble we had caused Him." Apart from the misrepresentation in this last sentence, is not the very purpose of Mr. Campbell's book to induce us all to take things more seriously, to impress on us the enormous evil of selfishness and the need of getting rid of it, and so to "get wayward humanity into line" with truth and right? Does God really not take His world seriously? Is sin a less serious matter to God than it ought to be to us? Strange that such questions should be called for. "Why God should be the injured party in all the miseries that have ensued is still less clear" (on what is said to be the evangelical conception of the world) "than why He created it?" But if selfishness be an injury to man, it must be still more so to God, who loves His human children. If God be really immanent in the universe, how can He fail to feel its sin and misery? If He is the perfect Love—the Heavenly Father, is man's selfishness and ingratitude no pain,

no real injury to Him? Was not old King Lear right when he cried—

> "Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend,
> More hideous when thou showest thee in a child
> Than the sea monster!
> . . . . . .
> Sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
> To have a thankless child."

This philosophy, however, leads to that assertion of "the fundamental oneness of man with God" which is really the newest and most sensational thing in the New Theology, and therefore to this we shall now devote our attention.

# CHAPTER IV

# THE ONENESS OF MAN WITH GOD

## CHAPTER IV

## THE ONENESS OF MAN WITH GOD

The unethical conception of God leads to the unguarded statement of "the fundamental unity of man with God." We can scarcely think that Mr. Campbell really means to assert what his words convey, but we must take his statements as they are given us, and, as already noted, we have here the really new and distinctive thing in this Theology. If the meaning we take out of the assertion be not intended, there is nothing really new in this so-called "New Theology."

Without doubt a great truth underlies the assertion. In a very true sense all consciousness, all life, all power is *one*. There is a true spiritual Monism as well as a false Pantheistic Monism. There is only one God, "of whom are all things," one Power, one Life, one ultimate Substance, one Infinite Being, the Source of all possible being. Man's life, moreover, as a self-conscious spiritual being,

is identical in its nature as such, and in its ultimate destiny, with the life of that God who has made Himself known as the *Father* of men. If we are really "His offspring" we must to some degree share in His life. If our ideal is sonship towards God, our *true* life must be the same in kind as His own, although presently finite in its form, and although we may not as yet have risen to it in its fulness. It is highly desirable that this should be realised, but the unity that Mr. Campbell affirms is incredible. Man has a *self* of his own and his real "oneness with God" is something *to be realised.* A human child shares in the life of its parents. But he does not at once partake of all that his parents are. He has to *become* what they are. He is not at once even a *moral* being. So man may participate to some degree in the one life, yet be far from being one with God. The ideal of his life may be sonship to God, yet he may be far from that sonship in reality. We have to ask, *what* is God? What kind of life is His in its truth and fulness? God is not *mere* being, but *Ethical* Being — the all-perfect Ethical Being. Nothing less than this can stand for the idea of God. While, therefore, *we*, in common with other creatures, share in life and consciousness, we can only be really *one with God* in *ethical* unity of heart and soul,

of mind and will. Mr. Campbell quotes Christ's sayings: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," and "I and the Father are one," and affirms that they are applicable to all men (here is the newness). But Jesus only spoke as He did because He was in complete *ethical* unity with the Father — such unity as He prayed that His disciples might also be brought into,—and until a man stands in the same full ethical unity with God, such language (even if it be metaphysical only) is little, if anything, short of blasphemy. Imagine a Nero or a Cæsar Borgia, or any wicked or self-deluded man, speaking thus! Yet he *is* a man, and, if such language be appropriate to man as man, any man ought to be able to use it.

This idea of the oneness of man with God is said to be founded in a "Philosophical Idealism," elsewhere described as a "Monistic Idealism," according to which there is only *one Consciousness*, in which we all share. But Mr. Campbell shows that he has sadly misconceived even this Monistic Idealism. We are not to criticise it at present. But we cannot help asking, what a bare consciousness without any content can possibly be? Consciousness must be consciousness of something. What is *that* Consciousness which God is? Do we really all share in *that*? The lower animals also

share in consciousness. Are they therefore also "one with God"? So far as the mere sharing in consciousness is concerned, there is indeed a unity of all conscious life. But how short a way does this carry us towards real "*oneness with God.*" Mere consciousness is in itself nothing distinctive of man. God's Consciousness of Himself is a perfect ethical consciousness, and only when ours is the same in kind can we truly be "one with God."

On the ground of the unity of all consciousness we have the unfortunate statement, "Jesus was God, but so are we." But how meaningless is this, however sensational it may be! Surely such a statement was never before made by any one believing in the Deity or Divinity of Christ in the Christian sense. All that it amounts to is simply this: God is Consciousness, Jesus shared in Consciousness, we share in Consciousness; therefore Jesus and we alike are God—because God is essentially Consciousness. But, so far as mere consciousness is concerned, any animal, if it could speak, could say precisely the same thing.

But, of course, the New Theology becomes here *self-contradictory.* It cannot hold to this its new foundation doctrine. "Sin," we are told, "is the divisive separating thing in our relations with one another and with God, the

Source of all, and so the assertion of our oneness with God involves getting rid of sin"; it involves "the realisation of our *true* self"; "the passing from the life of selfishness into that life of love which is the life of God," etc. Where is the *newness* now? We all believe and affirm this. Such statements clearly imply that in a very real and most important sense we are *not* one with God, but that the unity is something that has to be realised by our becoming other than we are as yet.

It ought to be pointed out that this is the constant teaching of the late Mr. T. H. Green of Oxford, whose name is mentioned by Mr. Campbell in connection with his doctrine, and who is generally regarded as the chief English representative of the philosophical or Monistic idealism on which Mr. Campbell says he bases his system. In order to prove how different the teaching of Mr. Green was from that of the New Theology we shall give one or two brief extracts from his two "Lay Sermons," posthumously published in a small volume entitled *The Witness of God and Faith.* "God," says Mr. Green, "is for ever perfect light and love. It is for us, under the limitations of a petty human life, to take such personal hold on this perfection as may fit us for its fuller

communication, when in His good time these limitations are taken away" (p. 39). "Our rational self-consciousness, the very presence of which within us assures us of there being a Reality, one, complete, and absolute, does this for us;—it keeps before us an object which we may seek to become. It is an element of identity between us and a perfect Being, who is *in full realisation what we only are in principle and possibility*, . . . it moves us to seek to become like Him, to become consciously one with Him, to have the fruition of His Godhead. In this sense it is that reason issues in the life of faith" (p. 85). "It is still our sins and nothing else that separate us from God" (p. 42). It will be noticed that our consciousness is here said to be only "an element of identity" between us and God; our life is in this respect the same; in other words, all spiritual life is of the same nature. But this by no means warrants the assertion of "the fundamental unity of man with God." There is much more in God than consciousness. He is, in Mr. Green's words, "a perfect Being, who is in full realisation what we only are in principle and possibility."

# CHAPTER V

# JESUS THE DIVINE MAN

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THE best chapters in Mr. Campbell's book are those which deal with that which he describes as "the greatest subject which at present occupies the field of faith and morals—that of the Personality of Jesus, and His significance for mankind." To our own mind the importance of His Personality culminates in His work as Redeemer, but we shall come to that shortly; and what Mr. Campbell says is certainly true and good, as far as it goes. The place given to Jesus in the chapter on the Divine man is very high. It seems at first sight almost all that could be desired, if at the same time it raises some questions that are not satisfactorily answered. The uniqueness of Jesus and of Christianity in its continuous dependence on Christ is not only admirably stated, but most successfully vindicated. His Divinity as expressing "the innermost of God" is maintained, although His Deity, in the sense of possessing

"the all-controlling Consciousness of the universe," and all that belongs to the Infinite, cannot be affirmed. No thoughtful theologian will attempt to do so: most find relief from the necessity by maintaining some form of Divine *Kenosis* or self-limitation. That there were not two *different* natures in Jesus, Divine and human, will also be widely accepted. That "in Him Humanity was Divinity and Divinity Humanity" is a good statement of the fact. Not to multiply quotations, Jesus is affirmed to be "very God." In our opinion, Mr. Campbell is also right when he says that Jesus is not to be accounted for as the manifestation of Deity self-limited and assuming humanity *in time*. We must go beyond time for the explanation. Specially refreshing is it to meet the affirmation of the continued presence and influence of Christ. "Christianity draws its sustenance from the belief that Jesus is still alive, and impacting Himself upon the world through His followers." "Other great religions trace their origin to the teaching and example of some exceptional person; Christianity does the same, but with the added conviction that Jesus is as much in the world as ever, and that His presence is realised in the mystic union between Himself and those who know and love Him." "Christianity without Jesus is the world

without the sun,"—we are very grateful for this.

Still, one does not feel satisfied with the statements in this chapter. Mr. Campbell believes rightly enough that, "although contrary to the actual statements of the creeds," there has been a tendency to speak and think of Christ as if He were in some sense *separate* from Humanity, and in his laudable endeavour to correct this error he shows a tendency on his own part to ignore the very real *distinction* (not "difference") between Christ and all others. Jesus, we are told, expressed fully the love of God, and is therefore Divine; so are all others in their measure who do the same. Is there nothing more to be said than this? Does it really meet the Christian conception of Christ to say that the difference between Him and General Booth is only one of degree in this respect? "'God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.' General Booth is Divine in so far as this is the governing principle of his life. Jesus was Divine simply and solely because his life was never governed by any other principle." This is without doubt true, *so far*; but does it cover the whole case? If Jesus was so completely *unique* as He is affirmed to have been, there must have been some reason why He was so.

Time has run on into the twentieth century after Christ; man has during that period made enormous strides forward in knowledge and in intellectual and moral development, yet Jesus Christ stands as truly unique and alone as ever He did, unapproached and unapproachable. This fact clearly marks Him off from all other men, and, since there can be no effect without a cause, there must be some reason for it. Since there can be no life-building without an adequate foundation, there must have been something in Jesus originally or *organically* that distinguished Him from all others, while it did not *separate* Him from Humanity nor make Him in any sense less genuinely human. Mr. Campbell says that he "does not make Jesus 'only man,' but 'the only Man,'—and there is a difference. We have only seen perfect manhood once, and that was the manhood of Jesus. The rest of us have not got there." But this seems to carry all that we are contending for. Why, during all the centuries of human life and amongst all the millions of human beings—belonging too to that humanity which is said to be God's self-expression—has there been but this one only man? If we have only seen manhood once, the rest have not been even truly and fully *men*. Surely we have here a very real distinction—that between man truly

and others not yet truly men. It certainly implies a real fundamental distinction of some kind.

Jesus is said to have possessed "a true human consciousness, limited like our own." But, manifestly, in some respects it could not have been so limited. We know that in respect of openness to God it was *not* so limited. He had at least an insight into the Divine as yet unparalleled. He had a God-consciousness such as no one *else* has ever pretended to have. (Mr. Campbell says later on that He had a consciousness of being "the Eternal Christ.") All this indicates a very real distinction. Mr. Campbell says that His special insight was due to the moral perfection of His nature, not to His metaphysical status. But again, it is just this solitary moral perfection of His nature that has to be accounted for,—His freedom from that something, call it sin or selfishness or anything else, that retards all other men, and at some point marks and mars their character. His "constant expression of God," as distinguished from the broken and imperfect, even to some extent opposing, character of all other lives, demands explanation. Mr. Campbell says that, according to Theology, He alone existed before the ages, He alone was Eternal to begin with,—and that this, if true, constitutes a gulf between Him

and all others. But if we have *all*, in some real sense, pre-existed in God, there need be no such gulf. Does not Mr. Campbell himself tell us that Jesus had the consciousness of being "the Eternal Christ." But this is really no mere verbal question as between "traditional Theology" and the New Theology. It is a vital question going to the heart of the subject. If the Person of Jesus Christ was not Eternal in the sense that He was the manifestation in the flesh of a "Person" in God—a "Person" in the theological sense, not in the numerical or individual sense of the word—what manifestation of *God* do we have in Jesus at all? "God is Love"? But how did men come to know this? Solely because they believed that Jesus was Himself *God* manifest in the flesh. If He was not such, if God was not so in Him as to constitute Him—Jesus Christ—God in human form, as truly as *man* in complete union with God, it is a misuse of words to call Christ *Divine* as well as human. It implies something much less than men believed they had seen in Christ. When we call Jesus Divine we are not using the term in the New Testament sense; and if we believe that that was a mistaken sense, we had better say so, if we are to be thoroughly outspoken.

Jesus, Mr. Campbell says, was "very God.'

The crux of the whole matter lies here. "Was He *really* such?" "Very God"!—can that be truly said of any other man? If not, why not?

Again, He is said to be, according to the oldest and the youngest Christian thought, "God *in* man, God manifest in the flesh." "God *in* man" is by no means adequate where God is affirmed to be in all men; it must be God *as* man, or the God-man. The real testing question is this: Was Jesus God incarnate; or only *an* incarnation of God; or, was God *personally* present in Christ, so that Christ was not merely a product of the creation, but the incarnation of a "Person" (in the sense before indicated) in the Being of the Creator in human form? If He was not this, He was not "very God" as Christianity has hitherto understood the term; if, on the other hand, He *was* this, then there was such a real and abiding distinction between Him and all other men as is not recognised by Mr. Campbell, but is essential to Christianity.

It is affirmed that in the end what is true of Christ will be true of all men; He came to show what we potentially are. If the distinction before mentioned be kept in view, there is no reason to find fault with this statement. It is scriptural and true. Jesus is "the first-born

among many brethren." Still, He *is* the first-born, and, according to the Scriptures, He in whom all others have their being and ideal of life. He is not only the first-born, but also the *Source* of the Sonship of others; and it is *this* that has to be accounted for. If it be a Divine ultimate mystery—for confessedly "great is the mystery of godliness"—better to leave it so than to give such an explanation as, while not intended to do so, really *seems* to bring Christ down to a lower level than that on which He has hitherto stood for us. There is a danger in levelling up as well as in levelling down. We need something that will lift us higher, and that shall for ever lift us higher than we are. When we are lifted up to the same level as Christ He loses His uplifting power. It is all very well to exalt humanity, but, Mr. Campbell being witness, our humanity is a very poor affair as we know it in general. It is highly desirable that we should recognise the revelation of our *true* selves in Christ. But it is equally necessary that we should see the revelation to be given in one who is in Himself *more* than man as we as yet know man. *Man*, as we know him even in the earthly Christ, is not yet the final word of God for us. The Infinite is before us in Him who has united our humanity to it in His own person, who truly "came from

God and went to God," who has "carried our humanity into the Godhead," from whence its potency originally proceeded. We are not pleading for going backward, but for going forward as the Divine human Christ would lead us. There is something higher and better yet to be learned than the newest New Theology can teach us. Other theologies have been tried, and their futility proved.

# CHAPTER VI

# THE "ETERNAL CHRIST"

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In Chapter VI. of *The New Theology* Jesus is represented as the manifestation of *the Eternal Christ.* In God there is a "side of His being which can only be described as the ideal or archetypal manhood," "the archetypal, eternal Divine Man, the source and sustenance of the universe, and yet transcending the universe." This "idea of a Divine Man, the emanation of the Infinite, the Soul of the universe, the source and goal of all humanity, is," we are told, "ages older than Christian Theology,"—going back even to Babylonia, and coming down to Apostolic times through Greek thought and Philo of Alexandria. It has been "variously described in the course of its history. It has been called the Word, the Son, and, as we have seen, the Second Person in the Trinity." "For various reasons," says Mr. Campbell, "I prefer to call it—or rather Him—the Eternal Christ." Now, of course, "the Son" is the term which is

characteristic of the New Testament, and which has been adopted by Christian Theology. What is to be gained by departing from it? The Son in God is a perfectly intelligible conception, and is the source and ideal of our Sonship. It does not mean a Person in God in the individual or numerical sense, as when we speak of two human persons, but a mode or aspect of the Divine personal existence. The Son in God as the Eternal *Father*. It was this Sonship that was incarnated and manifested in Christ.

"The Eternal Christ" is open to grave objections. "The Christ" was an historical Person. Doubtless there was ever in God all that was manifested in the Christ of history. But must there not be more in a *Divine* Person than can possibly be manifested in a finite human personality? The innermost nature of God as infinite love can, indeed, be so manifested, but this does not exhaust all that we have in view when we speak of "a Divine Being." He must be in Himself Infinite Being, and it is this Infinite Being that we must see to be with us in finite form in Christ. The very fact that the form is finite makes it certain that the Being so manifested must be more than is expressed in the finite human form of "the Christ."

The same objection lies against the ascription

of *manhood* to God. It is said that "we are justified in holding that, whatever else He may be, God is essentially *man*." We must think, therefore, of "an archetypal Divine man." Now, of course, there must be that in God which finds expression in man as we see man in his highest humanity in Christ. But because God is the source and fountain of our humanity, and is even, in His mode of Sonship, the ideal of our life, we have no right to apply to God the limited conception of "manhood" as we know it even in Christ. God is the Infinite Being, and man is not that *yet* at least; man as revealed, even in Christ, has the infinite still before him. Man, as the son of God, may yet prove to be capable of the infinite, as we believe Christ the Representative of our humanity has already entered into that life. Manhood, therefore, as we have ever yet seen and known it, is a limited conception, altogether inadequate for *God*. There may be in the infinite the potency of many forms of being greater than manhood. Mr. Campbell says that in these conceptions, we have the key to the Christology of Paul. Several German theologians have affirmed this, but the affirmation rests on the slenderest of grounds. Its chief basis is the statement in 1st Corinthians, "the second man is the Lord from heaven." But this by no means implies

that Paul believed that He who in His humanity showed Himself to be "the second Man" possessed a prior manhood in heaven. It was not to this shadowy ideal man that Paul was devoted, but to the *spiritual*, risen, and glorified Christ, as distinguished from a Christ regarded in His earthly form of manifestation merely.

The only advantage which these very dubious conceptions—to say the least—give the New Theology, is that they seem to give greater force to the attempt to lift our ordinary humanity up to the same level with Christ. "As we have come forth from this fontal manhood, we too must be, to some extent, expressions of this Eternal Christ; and it is in virtue of that fact that we stand related to Jesus, and that the personality of Jesus has anything to do with us. Fundamentally, our being is already one with that of the Eternal Christ, and faith in Jesus is faith in Him." Now, here again we have that ignoring of the ethical which is the radical error running through the whole of this Theology. This is said of man as man. But it was solely in virtue of the ethical quality of His Life that Jesus was "the Christ," and the incarnation of God. Fundamentally, our being is already one with Him, only as all who possess the life, etc., that proceeds from the one only source are one with all that proceeds from that source.

To be fundamentally one with *Christ* means, not merely to possess life from a common source with Him, but to have the *same* life in us. All life is by no means the same. To be one with Christ is to have the holy, ethical spirit of Christ voluntarily accepted and cherished as the spirit of our life—the basis of our character and of our higher being, and this man as man shows he does *not* possess.

Again, when it is said that Jesus is the fontal or ideal man who contains and is expressed in all human kind, we have the same ignoring of that ethical quality which constitutes the Christ. "Christ" is by no means expressed in all human kind, although one day He may be so. The evil in all this style of speech is that the ethical is constantly in danger of being lost sight of and confounded with the merely natural or even with the physical.

Once more, if Jesus be indeed "the fontal or ideal man who contains and is expressed in all human kind," if He is "central for us, and we are complete in Him," this surely implies a very real and most important distinction between Christ the Fountain and those who only find the springs of their life in Him.

# CHAPTER VII

# THE INCARNATION OF THE SON OF GOD

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In the next chapter of *The New Theology* the terms "the Eternal Christ," etc., are wisely dropped, and the chapter is headed "the Incarnation of the Son of God." But at the outset we have again that overlooking of the ethical which we have had so often to point out, and which in this connection throws a doubt even on the nature of the conception of the Incarnation as held by the New Theology. "We deny nothing," it is said, "about Him (Jesus) that Christian devotion has ever affirmed; but we affirm the same things of humanity as a whole in a differing degree. The practical dualism which regards Jesus as coming into humanity from something that beforehand was not humanity we declare to be misleading. Our view of the subject does not belittle Jesus, but it exalts human nature. Let this be clearly understood, and most of the objections

to it will vanish." It would seem, rather, that it is just this that raises the objections. Does not such a statement as we have just quoted really point to "a universal Incarnation," instead of to that unique Incarnation which has been already affirmed of Christ. "We affirm," it is said, "the same things of humanity as a whole." True, it is "in a differing degree." But if we look at humanity *as a whole*, where shall we behold any thing really to be compared with what we see in Christ? We witness *certain members* of the human race manifesting some of the same qualities which show Christ to be the Incarnation of God. There is doubtless also, as Mr. Campbell says, in all, something good —some sparks of love and capacity for self-sacrifice—which certainly proves that the same spirit that animated Christ is in some degree present in all men. But that is a very different thing from being able to "affirm the same things of humanity as a whole, in a differing degree." If the life of "humanity as a whole" had been a *Christ-like life*, although in a lower degree, the affirmation could have been made. But any one who reads history, or who looks abroad on the world to-day, knows how far that is from being the truth. Although the Spirit may be present in and to all men, it is not universally accepted as the true spirit of life.

It is here that we have the very unfortunate

saying, "Jesus was God, but so are we," which is given as a brief summing up of the position. True, it is followed by the statement: "Jesus expressed fully and completely, in so far as a finite consciousness ever could, that aspect of the nature of God which we have called the Eternal Son, or Christ, or Ideal Man who is the Soul of the universe and the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world; we are expressions of the same primordial Being." But this primordial Being is in Himself, and, as manifested in Christ, essentially a holy, loving, ethical Being. We are *not* expressions of that Being in His essential truth unless we are like Him in our spirit and character, which we are not, as a whole, at any rate. "Fundamentally, we are all one in this Eternal Christ." This is true with respect to the source, the ideal, and the potency of the life that we share in; but its *actuality* is something to be realised by us, something that man has to become. The *self* in man is a growing reality, and it can only be truly *one* with "the greater self," of which Mr. Campbell goes on to speak, as it takes up into itself the qualities of that greater self, and becomes conformed to God in His truth.

When it is asked, "Why should we not speak in a similar way about any other human consciousness"—as we do about the consciousness of Christ, whose earthly limited consciousness

"did not prevent Him from being really and truly God?" the answer is plain and obvious. It is, because the limited consciousness of Christ was none the less, even under its limitations, that very *ethical* consciousness that God is, and other consciousnesses are not by any means always such.

We are at one with Mr. Campbell in his endeavour to show that Jesus truly belonged to our humanity, and is one with it in its ideal truth. If we understand him aright, it is quite true to say that Jesus did not "come into humanity from something that beforehand was not humanity," except, indeed, that He came originally from God the source of all, and was the manifestation of God—the very presence of God in our humanity. He is right also in saying that "the greatness of Jesus and the value of His revelation to mankind are in no way either assisted or diminished by the manner of His entry into the world."

It is true that many, if not "most," reputable theologians "have now given up the Virgin-birth," and it is, alas! true also that it is still "a stumbling-block to many minds." This is to be greatly regretted, for a reason which Mr. Campbell does not mention, but which those who deem it necessary still to uphold the Virgin-birth as essential should lay to heart.

We shall state our position with respect to this much discussed question immediately. But meanwhile it is worth pointing out that the Gospel narratives of the Virgin-birth *do not teach the Incarnation of a pre-existent Divine Being*, as is commonly supposed, but merely the introduction in a miraculous manner of an entirely *new being*—by the direct creative act of God. For *this* reason, it is said: "Wherefore also that which is to be born of thee shall be called holy, the Son of God" (Luke i. 35). Whatever may be the truth concerning the Incarnation of the pre-existent Son of God, as Christianity came later to understand it, *that fact* is not implied in the narratives of the Virgin-birth. It is most probably for this reason, and not for that commonly given by those who reject the Virgin-birth, that Paul and the later writers of the New Testament do not refer to it: they held a *higher* conception of Christ. To them He was a Divine Being entering the world, and they could scarcely have thought of Him as doing so in the mode indicated by these primitive narratives.

The present writer, however, still believes (what he affirmed eight years ago in his work on "The Spirit and the Incarnation") that we are not in a position to dogmatise on this subject, or to totally reject the idea of "the

miraculous conception," as Mr. Campbell says he feels now compelled to do. While it cannot be upheld as the means by which the pre-existent, Eternal Son entered the world, and is not, as commonly regarded, necessary for the Incarnation of God in Christ, we are not warranted in absolutely denying it. If once we see that the *complete* Incarnation of God in Christ was not something effected in the birth of the little Child of Bethlehem, but was a gradual work in Him who "grew in grace" and was "perfected through suffering," we can also see that, while the humanity was *prepared* in Mary, a Divine spiritual fecundation of that prepared humanity may not have been impossible, but may even have been necessary in order to provide the organic basis of that life which, while truly human, was to be such a complete manifestation of God—the *uniqueness* of which is so evident, and is generally acknowledged. The power of *faith* is very great—"All things are possible to him that believes." Auto-suggestion is increasingly recognised as having a most powerful influence on the whole bodily system. Strong faith joined to expectancy may have been the medium of the Holy Spirit in bringing about *in a prepared humanity* that which seems to us such a wonderful result—as Mary is recorded to have

said, "According to Thy word be it unto me."

Mr. Campbell, arguing for the reanimation of the *Body* of Christ, says that the denial of its possibility "presumes an essential distinction between matter and spirit which I cannot admit. . . . Monistic idealism recognises no fundamental distinction between matter and spirit." Does not the same thing apply here in the very same way? If spirit can be influential to reanimate a *dead* body, might it not also (much more, surely) be influential to start the development of a *living* germ?

But without insisting on this, leaving it meanwhile an open question, there is certainly, as Mr. Campbell says, a great truth contained in the idea of a Virgin-birth. "Jesus was of Divine as well as human parentage. We do not account for Him merely by saying that He was the Son of Joseph and Mary, and the descendant of a long line of prophets, priests, and kings; we have to recognise that His true greatness came from above." We are not sure, however, whether Mr. Campbell fully grasps the truth that underlies the narratives of a birth through the Holy Spirit. It is just this truth, even apart from special Divine action, that leads us to that *something more* which we have said is necessary to explain the appearance

of Christ as belonging to our humanity, yet God incarnate—as truly human and yet truly Divine.

What is contained in it is said to be "the truth that the emergence of anything great and beautiful in human character and achievement is the work of the Divine Spirit, operating within human limitations." It is compared to the early narratives of the Creation, in which, according to the Babylonian version, "the sun of the heaven impregnated the virgin matrix of water with the seeds of cosmic life." Better still, surely, the *Genesis narrative*, where the Spirit of God is represented as *brooding* "dove-like" over the face of the deep. "This idea," he says, "became spiritualised in a much higher degree. The religious mind came to regard the physical, mundane, or distinctively human principle as the matrix upon which the Spirit of God brooded, bringing to birth a Divine idea." So, "a Divine element, a spiritual quickening is required for the evolution of anything God-like in our mundane sphere: it is a virgin-birth. Lower acting upon lower can never produce a higher. It is the downpouring and incoming of the higher to the lower which produces, through the lower, the Divine manhood which leaves the brute behind." "The Divine manhood is gradually, but surely, mani-

festing on the physical plane . . . every moral and spiritual advance is therefore of the nature of a virgin-birth, a quickening from above . . . 'Ye must be born anew,' or literally, 'quickened from above.'" "Every man who deliberately faces towards the highest, and feels himself reinforced by the Spirit of God in so doing, is quickened from above." All this is good and true, but would it not have been simpler and more in keeping with the accepted Christian mode of speech to say that the *Holy Spirit*, whose child Christ was on the one side, is the Source of all the spiritual development of humanity, and that this reached its culmination in Christ. The Incarnation of God in man is the result of a process originating in eternity, running through time, and realising itself in Christ. And it is the result, as Mr. Campbell himself here bears witness, not of what is immanent merely, but of the action of the Spirit of God on man. No one could show more clearly than he does that it could never have come about as the outcome of what was *originally* immanent merely. "Lower acting upon lower can never produce a higher." There was, therefore, Divine transcendent action all throughout, and the truth of the Virgin-birth may be summed up as follows: Christ was the child of the Holy Spirit, His appearance *was* the result of Divine

creative action—of the spiritual on the physical. This was exercised, not in one moment of time merely, but throughout the whole history of the race.

But we are now brought back to the radical error of the New Theology. The truth of the Incarnation, we are told, must be "read on a larger scale. All human history represents the Incarnation, or manifesting of the Eternal Son, or Christ of God. The Incarnation cannot be limited to one life only, however great that life may be. It is quite a false idea to think of Jesus and no one else as the Son of God incarnate?" Now, see what confusion and contradiction we have here! Have we not just been told that Jesus is wholly *unique* in the world; that we have only seen manhood once; that in Him alone we can behold a complete manifestation of that which God is, etc.? Is it not just because this is so that we speak of the Incarnation of *God* in Christ? How, then, can there be *others* who are Incarnations of God as truly as He is? What is true is, that the process which culminated in Christ is one which was (and is) working itself out in humanity as a whole; and just as the flower belongs to the plant, and with the seed is the culmination of its process of development, so Jesus belongs to humanity and is its crown.

But just as the whole plant does not develop into the flower, no more does the whole of humanity, or each member of it, become actual incarnations of God. It was a real process in humanity, but in its actual working out it did not spread itself over the whole race, but *like all evolution* worked onwards and upwards *in one definite line* till its goal was reached. This is the method of all development. Man crowns the animal creation, but the whole animal life before humanity did not rise into manhood. The principle of development kept on working in one special line, till man was reached. So, in that spiritual evolution which realised itself in the entrance of Jesus Christ into the world, the Spirit of God operated in some measure in all, but found its line of definite, progressive advance in that Hebrew race which we therefore speak of as "the chosen people of God." It was *in that one line* that the Divine spiritual working in humanity proceeded till its purpose was realised in Christ. Therefore He was, on the human side, "of the seed of David," and born of Mary of Nazareth. It is for this reason that Christ stands forth unique, the Son of God and the Head of humanity, and there can be no more two Incarnations of *God* in this world, and so two Heads of humanity, than there can be a normal man with two heads. We must

be content to be only *members* of that Body of which Christ is the one true Divine-human Head. In Him humanity reaches a higher stage of its life—the purely spiritual, and it is *through* Him that the same result is to be realised in the race.

As already said, it was not merely in the birth of Christ that God was incarnate, but as the result of the life that rose upon that foundation. God was only fully incarnated, when His Holy Love found its full manifestation in the complete self-sacrifice of Calvary. And from that moment Christ became the Spirit and power of that life of God in man which had been realised in His Person, and which it is meant that all should find in their measure. "The same Christ," says Mr. Campbell, "is seeking expression through every human soul"; and Jesus, he has told us, *is* this Christ. "He is on the throne, and the sceptre is in His hand. We can rise towards Him by trusting, loving, and serving Him." All this is true, but, if so, surely this Christ, this "Jesus on the throne," is high above us all, as the king is above his subjects, although He calls us not subjects merely, but His brethren, which in the realised truth of our life we are. This Christ, we have been told, is "very God." But, the New Theology adds, "by doing so we shall demon-

strate that we too are Christ the Eternal Son." Yes, when "we too" become incarnations of God in the same fulness as Christ was; but it is to be feared that this is something a long way off for the most of us. Not that we should despair of ever reaching a full sonship towards God after the image of Christ. Let this be our ideal; let us earnestly aspire after it; let us be certain that this is the ultimate meaning of life; let us see how it makes all life sacred, all suffering worth enduring, death itself but an instrument in the great work: but let us not imagine that it is ours *till we really are conformed to Christ.*

It is true that there is "no life, however depraved, which does not occasionally emit some sign of its kinship to Jesus and its eternal sonship to God." But it is both foolish and wrong to say, as does the New Theology, that wherever you see this manifested you see "the Spirit of Christ incarnate." You do nothing of the sort; you see *something* of that Spirit, no doubt, but it may be amidst such immoral surroundings as are quite contradictory to "the Spirit of Christ." A bad man may at some moments manifest something of the spirit of self-sacrifice; but you cannot therefore say, surely, that in him *the Spirit of Christ* is incarnate. Let us hope, with

Mr. Campbell, that some day that Spirit will truly be in possession of us all—incarnate in us all. But let us remember that it is only by a painful process—a process illustrated by that Cross through which alone even Christ found full self-expression—in which "the old man" must die that the Christ-man may live in us—that such a result can be attained, whether in time or in eternity.

# CHAPTER VIII

# DIVINE IMMANENCE AND TRANSCENDENCE

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## DIVINE IMMANENCE AND TRANSCENDENCE

"The New Theology," says Mr. Campbell, "is an untrammelled return to Christian sources in the light of modern thought. Its starting-point is a re-emphasis of the Christian belief in the Divine immanence in the universe and in mankind." This is the note of all our modern "progressive" Theology. "The fundamentals of the Christian faith," it is said, "need to be rearticulated in terms of the immanence of God." The Divine transcendence is verbally acknowledged, but it is formally left aside, and the whole stress laid on the immanence of God. "It is with the immanent God that we have to do."

There is, of course, a great truth in the Divine immanence rightly understood, and not separated from the Divine transcendence. We all believe in the "Divine immanence" rightly stated; but *what does it mean?*

It is in general very vaguely conceived, and

in practical life it is almost quite uninfluential. In a recent American story a bright and intelligent wife asks her cultured but indifferent husband: "Is it true that God is immanent in us all?" "I suppose so," he answers; "but it does not greatly matter." It concerns us very much, however, to endeavour to understand a subject of which so much is made in the New Theology, to recognise the actual truth there is in it, and its bearings on Christian doctrine and life. We must therefore deal somewhat fully with this matter, endeavouring to be as plain as possible for the sake of readers unfamiliar with the subject.

The New Theology evidently believes that in its affirmation of the Divine immanence in the universe and in man it has that which is most in consistency with "modern thought." It is to be feared, however, that it is here making a great mistake—one that will prove fatal to its permanence. The immanence of *God* is *not* a principle of modern thought outside this Theology itself. Immanence of some kind, in other words *Evolution*, is so, but this does not necessarily imply that "modern thought" asserts the immanence of *God*. (Cf. Otto, *Naturalism and Religion*, chap. xii.).

Immanence is often confounded with what is really transcendence. Of immanence, an

eminent preacher has recently said: "It is the truth that the Holy Spirit is directly concerned in every human personality, so that, wherever there is a human being there God is, not identical with the being, but a distinct, present, indwelling power, working upon the human will, wooing and winning the human personality." That we cordially assent to. But it is not the immanence of the New Theology; it is not the immanence of "modern thought"; it is as truly transcendence as it is immanence. The Holy Spirit that thus dwells in, works on, woos and wins the human personality, must be transcendent to the personality which it so indwells and seeks to influence.

We heartily agree with Dr. Horton, that *such* "immanence of God, once clear of the moral confusion of Pantheism, and made intelligible to the consciousness of all, may well be the starting-point of the New Theology." But, unfortunately, this is not the immanence which Mr. Campbell makes his starting-point, for that is simply the indwelling of God in the universe and in man, while transcendency is *by his theory* practically ignored.

Let us ask what is meant by the terms "Immanence" and "Transcendence." The literal dictionary meaning of immanence is "remaining within, inherent, indwelling." It

is defined in Chambers's *Twentieth Century Dictionary* as "the notion that the intelligent and creative principle of the universe pervades the universe itself, a fundamental conception of Pantheism." Transcendence means "rising above, surpassing, extending beyond." In theology it denotes the all-environing Presence of God as the Infinite Spirit, around and above, and, in some measure, within, all that is in the universe. God, according to Christian Theology, is at once immanent and transcendent.

The Divine transcendence which Mr. Campbell imperfectly describes as "the obvious truth that the infinite Being of God must transcend the infinite (finite?) universe"—is said to have "been perverted in such a way as to amount to a practical dualism, and to lead men to think of God as above and apart from the world." God is certainly *above* the world, but He is by no means *apart* from it, and it is only a *perversion* of the great truth of the Divine transcendency that would lead any one so to think of Him. The Divine transcendence is a truth of which all Scripture is full, one which all religion must acknowledge, apart from which there could be no religion, no such Being as *God*, no such thing as "the immanence of God in the world." Wherever we see immanence we at the same time witness trans-

cendence. Neither is ever found acting or existing singly.

The statement, that it is a *re-emphasis* of the doctrine of Divine immanence that is called for, implies that at one time it was specially prominent and influential in Christian Theology. But we know of no period at which immanence was emphasised at the expense of the Divine transcendence.

It would take more time and space than are available at present adequately to trace the history of the idea of Immanence. It entered into much of early religious thought in the form of *Animism.* It dominates Hindu thinking, and it played a part in ancient Greek philosophy.

For its most influential source in the stream of thought that has come down to us we may perhaps go back to Plato's idea of a Soul of the World and to Aristotle's immanent formative principle. But both Plato and Aristotle affirmed a transcendent, spiritual Being as the source of all that operates in Nature and in Man. In the Stoic philosophy the immanence of God made Him, in general, merely the Soul of the World, so that, for the most part, God was lost in nature and man in physical dissolution. The "Platonising Fathers" of the Christian Church (who are often referred to as

having introduced the idea of Divine immanence into theology), while they maintained the presence and influence of the Logos or Divine Reason in the world, firmly opposed any identification of God with the world and maintained the Divine transcendency. To Clement, God is exalted above all space and time. Yet "every stimulus of good comes from God. He employs those men who are peculiarly fitted to guide and instruct others as His organs to work on the greater part of mankind." Origen, in particular (the first great Christian theologian), in his reply to Celsus, repels the idea that God and the world are one. While holding, like the Stoics, that there is "a Soul of the World," he did not, with them, make this to be God. God was to him "pure Spirit," incorporeal, invisible, spaceless, the "Author of the World," apart from whom nothing happens. God was not contained *in* the world, but rather containing all. In His spiritual transcendency nothing could be really separate from Him; as Christ taught, said Origen, "not even a sparrow could fall to the ground without our Father." Evil had no part in God, for man's will was free.

In Western Christianity the Divine transcendency was no doubt often in danger of being perverted into a tendency to remove

God to a distance from the world and man. This was corrected in a wholesome way by the various Pantheistic thinkers who arose from time to time; and under the influence of Spinoza, Schelling, Hegel, and others the idea of immanence came to play a very important part in both philosophy and religion. The scientific doctrine of evolution or development necessarily implies it. As already said, it has been the dominant note in much of recent progressive theology, although the endeavour has usually been made to maintain at the same time the Divine transcendency.

Some recent developments, however, in more than one quarter, indicate a danger of the idea of Divine immanence being held or stated in such a way as would repeat the old error of the Stoics, and, in giving us a merely immanent Deity, leave us without any real God at all. An exclusive emphasis on immanence has always been inimical to religion. Thoroughly carried out, it issues in a Pantheism which identifies God with Nature and with man. It may be a desirable corrective to that perversion of the idea of transcendence which makes it seem to mean a God at a distance from us. But the idea of immanence, as commonly presented, is extremely vague and indefinite, and

it is very desirable to try to get at the truth concerning it.

Is *God, or a Divine Being*, really *immanent* in the universe and in man? To get a definite and decisive answer, let us ask what is meant by *God*, the *universe*, and *man*. We have already seen the meaning of *immanence*. *God* is the Infinite, Eternal, Omnipresent, Omniscient Spirit, the all perfect Ethical Being. The *universe* is practically the same thing as the creation, something proceeding *from* God. Whether or not we regard it as the expression or manifestation of God, it cannot be identified with God Himself. *Man* is the highest form of life that we know in the universe or the creation. Now, if we remember these definitions—which we think are virtually correct—how can we seriously believe that *God*, the all-perfect Ethical Being, is actually dwelling in or personally present and acting in the universe and in man *till we come to Christ*. If God be personally *in* the physical universe, then everything that happens therein is the direct acting of His personal will; for certainly there is no *other* will in the physical universe. But if we think of the things that happen therein—of, say, those recent terrible earthquakes with their ruthless destruction of human life, how can we attribute such things to the direct acting

of an all-perfect Ethical Being? If we think of *the animal creation*, with all its fierce, savage instincts, and what are often cunning and cruel actions, we cannot possibly believe *it* to be personally indwelt by a God of Love. As Principal Rainy wrote in reply to Professor Pfleiderer's insistence on the Divine immanence: "The immanence of God, assumed and granted, does nothing to shed new light on the world of nature or man, nor are the difficulties which have always beset natural theology in the least alleviated by it. For example, in this presence of His, God upholds all forces and tendencies, alike the conservative and the destructive. He is immanent in the serpent and the tiger, as much as in the dove and the lamb. And, in regard to man, He maintains our powers when we are using them well, and when we are using them ill,—both alike as far as the doctrine of immanence is concerned, —not less truly immanent in us in the time of our errors and our sins than at any other time." (Lecture on *The Supernatural in Christianity*. T. & T. Clark, 1904.)

If we go to *man*, and review his history from the primitive cave-dweller on through the bloodshed and cruelty of ancient civilisations, down through the egoism, war, and strife of the centuries, to the selfishness which Mr.

Campbell truly says is the source of almost all our worst evils to-day, we shall find it equally impossible to believe that a holy and loving God dwelt, or can possibly have dwelt, in man as man.

"That there can be nothing outside the Infinite" is certainly true; but the converse, that the Infinite is personally inside of everything, is with equal certainty false. Else God would be personally present in every rock and stone,—in short, in every object in the creation. He is personally present *to* everything; nothing can be really separated from Him; all things are *in* God as the infinite transcendent Spirit; nothing can happen wholly apart from Him; He is, in some measure, in every thing and being: but He cannot be personally present in anything, nor in any being, till there is a being present in the world capable of containing and expressing Him in His essential truth, and that, we repeat, we do not have till we come to Jesus Christ.

Yet there is a real and most important truth in the doctrine of Divine immanence. There may be immanence without personal presence. A man's thought, purpose, even his love, may be immanent in a machine that he constructs to do some useful work, but certainly the man himself is not immanent in his machine.

So the thought, purpose, love, Divine ideal may be immanent in the world and in man without the actual, personal presence of God therein. Of course, the world is not a mere machine. There is *more* than the Divine thought, etc., immanent in it,—there is a principle of life in virtue of which it goes on developing. But this does not involve the actual indwelling of *God*. There are different degrees or grades of life, and it is long before that ethical life which is God's can make its appearance in the world. There is a Divine thought, purpose, power, deepest of all in the world; but that does not mean the actual, personal indwelling of *God*.

We get our best conception of immanence and the "modern" idea of it from what we witness in the case of an *organism*, which through gradual development realises itself. It may be a flower, an animal, or a man. In every organic being there is an immanent life-principle, which is at the same time the ideal and potency of the organism, that which shall gradually clothe itself with the appropriate form and appear in the completed development,—in the case of animal life, it appears as the conscious self. We have it in every seed, in every egg and germ.

Now, the world, or the universe itself, is but

a larger *organism*. It, too, has its ideal and life-principle. It is *this* that is *immanent*, not a personal Being. Just as in the individual plant or animal, *Life* is immanent, but the entire Universal Life is not there, so is it with respect to the world, which also is only one of an indefinite number of worlds. As with each organism, it had its original immanent principle, which has dominated its development, and will in the end realise itself. But its self-realisation has been a very gradual process, and as it proceeded there has always come to be a fuller measure of that which was ideally and potentially contained in it actually *in* the world. The complete thought and full potency of the evolving world was at each stage transcendent to that which was evolving. If we look back on the world's history we shall see this plainly. There was no man or animal in the beginning, only certain forces working rationally in a material embodiment. Under their influence the world gradually developed, the earth took shape, became fitted for the abode of life, and in due time *life* showed itself. There was an immanent principle gradually realising itself; but there was not a personal God dwelling in the original fire-mist—the fiery, revolving globe, the ice-covered earth, or in any form of the evolving world. To

say so would be, to use Mr. Campbell's word, "nonsense." As the result of the increasing evolution of the immanent principle, *man* at length was reached, and in man there was far more of that which was potentially in the world-principle, now actually *in* the world. But man, in order to be man, became *a separate self*; and, while the immanent Divine would raise him into ever higher life, this separate self may cling to the lower life, and refuse to be so uplifted. In man, till we come to Christ, *God* was not personally *in* the world. His Spirit was everywhere present, and as the result of man's development came to be operative on, or even indwelling the human spirit. But God Himself could not possibly be *in* the world as a personal Being till there was a human person capable of giving expression to that ethical character which alone gives us *God*. This is the very meaning of the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ.

Moreover, apart from *transcendent* influences, the development which we witness, whether of the world or of man, could never have taken place. We may see this well illustrated in the case of a *seed*. It has an immanent life-principle, in virtue of which it will, under due conditions, grow into the plant or flower or tree. But apart from the transcendent influ-

ences of the soil, the air, the moisture, and the sunshine, no such development could ever take place. So, for the world itself, apart from transcendent forces, we cannot so much as even imagine a start given to it. Such forces have been operating on it throughout its history. Man has an immanent life-principle—a will to live, which comes to shine also as an ideal within him, and to command him in the name of righteousness; but, apart from the transcendent social and other influences that have played upon him, he never could have become *man*, with the immanent rational and moral consciousness he now possesses. Its presence in him is wholly due to transcendent influences falling on and combining with what was up to that point actually immanent. So again, ever since the moment that he believed in a God and in an unseen spiritual world, transcendent *spiritual* influences have entered his life, and it is to *these* that the immanent religious nature that now characterises him is wholly due. If we go to the heathen world, and note the dense ignorance of God in His truth in which millions of human beings are left to dwell, and the horrid cruelties that are practised, often in the very name of religion, we shall find a most convincing refutation of the idea that *God* is immanent in humanity. The

immanence of God in man is a growing reality, and we never see it in its truth till we behold the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ.

Deepest of all, there is the Divine Ideal and potency of life. But just as in any organism, this can only *gradually* appear and realise itself. God's thought of Himself in the form of Sonship, is the ideal principle of the world's life. It was this that declared itself and was realised in Christ, and which still seeks through Him to realise itself in us all. But this, again, is through the transcendent influences which come to us from and in Christ as God's self-realisation in that form in this world.

Belief in a transcendent God is essential to anything that can be called religion. Even deepest of all in what may be described as pantheistic religions, the yearning of the human soul has always been for communion with a Divine Being or with Divine Beings, above and beyond itself. This, indeed, is a proof that the life that is immanent is *of God*, has its ideal in Him, and can only realise itself in union with God in His transcendent fulness.

If we go to Biblical religion in particular, we shall see that its God was always conceived as a transcendent Being. Jehovah of Israel was outside of and above the people. If He was

amongst them otherwise than symbolically, it was as a Person apart from themselves, yet by no means *distant* from them. The more highly developed thought of God was that of a Being who, while He filled heaven and earth, and was near to His worshippers, was above the world, "sitting upon the circle of the earth," to whom men prayed and looked up, to whom they offered sacrifice and worship, and in whom they trusted. Such also was "the God and Father" of Jesus Christ. He was immanent in the growing flowers, in the grass of the field, and by His Holy Spirit in His own and in His disciples' hearts. But He was also the Heavenly Father, to whom He prayed, and in whom He trusted, the Father who was with men in secret, and should openly reward His true worshippers, before whom the very hairs of our head are numbered, and apart from whom not even a sparrow could fall to the ground. The God of Paul was this transcendent Father. It is a strange misconception of his famous saying at Athens when it is made to support immanence instead of transcendence. "For *in Him* we live and move and have our being" is surely a declaration of the transcendence of God. He was speaking in the presence of Epicureans and Stoics who identified God with the world and its objects, and it was

expressly a supramundane God, a Creator of the World, Ruler and Judge of men, that he declared to them, yet One who "is *not far from each one of us.*" So, in the most highly developed form of Christianity in the Fourth Gospel, God is *Spirit*—the Father from whom Jesus came and to whom He returned — the Father "who is greater than I." He certainly did not return to a merely immanent Deity. God was immanent in Him, but He was also transcendent. Christ's whole life was lived in communion with this Heavenly Father, who in His transcendent Spirit visited Him and dwelt in Him. When He spent whole nights on the lonely mountain-side in prayer, He was not simply communing with His own higher self, or with a merely immanent Deity. When He pleaded in Gethsemane that the cup that was given Him to drink might pass from Him, if possible, it was to a truly transcendent God and Father that He appealed; and His cry from out of the darkness of the Cross was certainly sent up to a God who was transcendent. If, therefore, we are to go by Christ, if He is really "the last word concerning God," it is *not* with an immanent so much as with a transcendent God and Father that we have to do.

God in His transcendency is never absent

from His world or distant from His children. He is the all-containing Infinite Spirit, "in whom we live and move and have our being," who is "not far from each one of us." If we would revive religion and make it real, if we would bring the Kingdom of God to the earth, what we have to do is, not to preach such an immanence of God as neither the Intellect nor the Conscience will bear witness to, which the plain, and sometimes awful, facts of Nature and Life contradict, to the inadequacy of which Heathenism with its horrors is the standing witness, but to clear away the misconceptions which have gathered around the *Divine transcendency*, to proclaim God anew as Jesus preached Him, as the spiritual environment of our life, as the Father who is ever near us, and by His Spirit in some measure within us, coming in that Spirit's fulness in Christ, who in His Love is yearning over us, who has come in His Son to save us, who seeks by His Holy Spirit to possess us wholly, to make us His true children and co-workers with Himself in the world.

# CHAPTER IX

# IMMANENCE AND TRANSCENDENCE IN "THE NEW THEOLOGY"

## CHAPTER IX

## IMMANENCE AND TRANSCENDENCE IN THE NEW THEOLOGY

IMMANENCE is said to be the Master-Key of the New Theology, while Transcendence is *formally* ignored. "It is the immanent God with whom we have to do." A merely immanent God, however—to whom we need not pray, and who could not possibly help us—would be but a very poor substitute for the all-holy, all-wise, all-good, transcendent God and Father of Jesus Christ, who in His holy and loving Presence is ever with us. It is virtually a return to that teaching of the ancient Stoics which failed to save the world. In the same number of the *Hibbert Journal* which contained Mr. Campbell's article on the New Theology, one appeared (not in any opposition to Mr. Campbell) showing this to be the case. Why should we go back to that old teaching, the inadequacy of which was proved? Although there were elements of truth, and even of grandeur in it, Christianity is

surely a great advance upon it. As we have seen, it was not an immanent Deity that Paul proclaimed to the Stoics when he got the chance of addressing them at Athens, but a transcendent, yet near, Creator and Judge of men, who called all men to repentance, and who had come in Christ to save them.

Mr. Campbell suggests that his doctrine is the same as the "Higher Pantheism" of Tennyson. But it is not even that:

> "For is He not all but thou, that hast power to feel 'I am I'? . . . .
> *Speak to Him* thou, for *He hears*, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—
> Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

That is not an immanent but a transcendent Deity, or at least transcendent as well as immanent.

What the New Theology forgets is that there are *degrees* of immanence; that God can only be truly present *in* the world as there are forms adequate to His self-expression. To quote again the illustration of General Booth and the crocodile,—if a crocodile is a much less adequate expression of God than General Booth, that surely means that God is *in* General Booth in a much higher degree than He is in that

repulsive and dangerous reptile. The immanence of God is an increasing reality in the world. God can only be truly dwelling in man when the Holy Love that He is becomes the fully received Spirit of man's life. Till then we have always something less than God, and, whether shining as ideal upon us, or moving by His Spirit within us, God is still transcendent to ourselves.

Now mark the inconsistencies of this Theology of immanence. While we are assured that the immanence of God is the great truth that can give a right theology, and save the world, we are at the same time told that creation or divine self-expression is only possible by means of Divine *self-limitation.* Is it not manifest, therefore, that it is *only* as He has limited Himself that God is in the world and in man, *not* as He is in Himself? In this sense there is truly something of God in *everything*—in every stone and insect, bird and beast, as well as in man. But this is a very different thing from the immanence of *God.* Mr. Campbell himself makes the difference emphatic. There are, we are told (as we have already seen), "two modes of God — the infinite, perfect, unconditioned, primordial being, and the finite, imperfect, conditioned, and limited being of which we

are ourselves expressions." It is, therefore, only this "finite, imperfect, conditioned, and limited being" that is immanent. And how can we ever, through the unfolding of *this* immanence merely, behold the complete expression of God in the world? Mr. Campbell sees the difficulty, and says: "Yet these two are one, and the former is the guarantee that the latter shall not fail in the purpose for which it became finite." But this is to fall back on the *Transcendent* as that which shall really secure the fulfilment of the Divine purpose in the world.

It need not be a surprise, therefore, if we show now that in all that is most important in Mr. Campbell's book, it is not really immanent action, but *transcendent influences* that are brought into play. To our own mind, indeed, it seems self-evident that if God be the infinite, all-perfect Spirit, and man a finite, spiritual being in, or in relation to, that infinite Spirit, God must at every stage of man's life transcend man. He is the spiritual environment of our being, influentially present in His Holy Spirit, in whatever way the influences of that Spirit may be mediated. It is simply impossible to advocate religion apart from reference to a transcendent God and transcendent influences.

Therefore we find even Mr. Campbell, after all that he has said of immanence, not only affirming the Divine transcendent influences, but revealing that much of what he ascribes to immanence (and the higher immanence in man itself) is really due to those transcendent influences which he formally ignores. He speaks, for example, of that "downpouring and incoming of the higher to the lower, which produces, through the lower, the Divine manhood which leaves the brute behind." "The principal factor in man's evolution" is said to be "the incoming of the Divine Spirit." "The sacrificial life and death of Jesus have meant the inpouring of a new Spirit into human affairs, such as had never been known in the same degree before." If words have any meaning, those "incomings" and "downpourings" are not immanent but *transcendent* influences. So again we read of our being "reinforced by the Spirit of God," of the "help of the Holy Spirit," of being "born from above," of the impossibility of the lower "of itself becoming the higher." Christ, as the complete expression of God, with the influences that go forth from Him as such, Jesus, "the last word about God," "the very Christ of glory who is seeking expression through every human soul," is surely *transcendent* to ourselves. These, and other similar state-

ments, inconsistent with the basis laid down in immanence, show the confusion that reigns in this New Theology, and that the most important influences that have operated in human life have been due, by Mr. Campbell's own assertion, not to what was immanent, but to what was transcendent. But, indeed, is not Mr. Campbell's own appeal to men, throughout his Book and in his earnest addresses, an illustration of the reality of the transcendent, and of the impossibility of making any advance whatever save through the operation of transcendent influences?

*Note.*—Since the subject is so fundamental to the New Theology, we notice Mr. Campbell's statement of immanence in his Glasgow address as reported in the *Christian Commonwealth.* It is said to mean "literally, the indwelling of God in the creation and in the human soul." But it has been differently explained. There are said to be three conceptions of immanence.

(1) *Pantheistic*—all is God. This is rejected because we have some power of choosing our own course in life, and we judge and condemn others according to the way that choice has been made.

(2) *The popular view.* "In some real sense He indwells humanity, but it is impossible to tell where the Being of God leaves off and that

of man begins." "God and man are not one, and never can be." It is said that this theory has never been able to show what the immanence of God really means without the tendency to topple over into Pantheism. This, we should say, must be true of it, if it "cannot tell where the Being of God ends and man's begins." It is with the separate self, which stands in relation to God as transcendent.

(3) *His own view.* "We are individually a separated portion of the Divine essence. *We have no being that is not God's.*" (Italics ours.) We cannot see how this differs from Pantheism. The Divine essence seems to be even physically conceived. It might be true if we were able to hold the ancient *emanation* theories. But it is impossible to entertain these in the light of our modern knowledge of evolution. This shows us that whatever man is, he has *become.* Whatever there is *in* him, whether you call it "God" or "man," is the result of slow, often painful, development, of a rise from a much lower form of being, in which we could not possibly speak of the actual indwelling of God, and is the result of transcendent influences.

Again, if we are "a separated portion of the Divine essence," how can *sin* be possible to us?

The Divine essence, whether separated or not, *is* the Divine essence. Sin is just the effort, or the tendency, to live for the separate self, apart from God and the whole. But the "Divine essence," which is Love, could not possibly have any such tendency. Therefore the individual self is *not* the Divine essence in whole or in part, but simply and solely *ourselves*, so made to arise by God.

There is another doctrine of Immanence, which Mr. Campbell does not notice, which is really that which Science or "modern thought" warrants, and which Religion can accept, namely, the immanence of a Divine life-principle which gradually unfolds itself, the nature of which becomes manifest in its highest manifestation and self-realisation in Jesus Christ.

In the same address reference is made to the One going out into the many, in order that the many may come again into unity with the One. This is true, but in the way in which it is stated we note the old obliviousness of the ethical. The One who goes out is essentially an ethical Being, and it is *only* in ethical life that the return can be made. Moreover, while the One so goes out into the creation, He is in this very fact constantly maintaining His Life of Love. It is an eternal process in which God is for ever, at the same time tran-

scendent, for ever returning to Himself. It is as such transcendent Being that He stands in the closest relation to the separate selves of "the many" when once they have become such. The ideal is *always* transcendent to that self, whose ideal it is. Immanence is never really separable from transcendency.

# CHAPTER X

# EVIL AND SIN

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## EVIL AND SIN

We pass now to what may be termed the more practical portion of the New Theology, the statements concerning evil, sin, and salvation, embracing what seems to our mind the most important matter of all, the Cross of Christ or "the Atonement."

Mr. Campbell's discussion of the problem of evil is bold, but most unsatisfactory, and he has allowed himself to be carried into statements concerning sin, now familiar to all, which are to be greatly regretted. If there is one thing more than another which a preacher seeking to serve God and man ought not to do at the present time, it is to say anything that would seem in any measure to lessen the sense of the reality and evil of sin or selfishness. What is needed more than anything else is a deep conviction of the evil and of the necessary doom of the sinful, or merely self-centred, life.

According to the New Theology "Evil is

a negative, not a positive term." On the contrary, it is *both.* It is negative with respect to the true life, but positive with respect to the lower, false life—often cruelly so. Good is said to be "being, and evil not-being." Good is rather true and permanent being, but evil is also very real, though it is false and impermanent being. "Finiteness," we are told, "presumes it"; "nothing finite can exist without it." See then where we are landed: Evil must be ascribed to God Himself, who, we are told, limits Himself to the finite in the creation. This is a New Theology with a vengeance. But is it not, at the same time, its *reductio ad absurdum* or self-refutation? Limitation, imperfection, are by no means identical with *evil.*

In our present existence, evil is "necessary," it is said, "in order that we may know there is such a thing as good." Now, no doubt good implies the *possibility* of evil; but it does not necessarily involve its actual existence.

We must utterly deny that it is necessary for God actually to experience evil in order to know Himself as Good or to be able to manifest His love.

The perception of evil "is the concomitant of your expanding consciousness of what is good. The moment that you see a thing to be

wrong, you have affirmed that you know, however vaguely, what is required to put it right." But this is growth in the knowledge of *goodness*, and therefore in that of possible or actual evil as contrary to what is good. It is surely possible, even for a finite being, to have the knowledge of his true relationship to other beings, without being taught it through the experience of evil. Take Mr. Campbell's illustration of the shadow on the pavement cast by "the row of houses between your vision and the rising sun." The shadow is not real, we are told; it never did more than "show the place that needed to be filled with light." But there was a *positive* element there all the same. The shadow was caused by "the row of houses between your vision and the rising sun." It was caused by something that hid the light, and surely that was positive enough. So *sin* is caused by that lower nature which is allowed to hide the light of Duty or of Love which would otherwise fill the soul. Or take another simple illustration: "Black is the absence of all colour" (the quotation is made from a current scientific paper). Black, therefore, may be described as *negative* merely: it is only the absence of light. But *why*? Because (the quotation is continued) "it *absorbs* all colour." Therefore the negation arises through very

*positive* action. It is the same in man's nature.

Mr. Campbell has a friend who described the devil as *a vacuum*. But his friend would find a vacuum sufficiently positive to destroy his life if he were to put his head into it. Not long since, if we mistake not, there was a claim made for damages to a carpet owing to an improperly used vacuum-cleaner which had sucked all the pile out of it; and the claim was successful. So we greatly fear that if the soul of man suffer itself to be long enough exposed to that vacuum which evil is, all the good, and ultimately all real, life, may be sucked out of it, and we shall get no damages; "for what shall a man give in exchange for his life, or soul?"

We shall not stay to discuss what Mr. Campbell says about pain and suffering. No doubt they are inevitable, in whatever way we may try to explain the great problem they present. We are concerned now about *sin*, and shall proceed to show how very positive it is as represented by Mr. Campbell, in spite of his theory of negation. On page 51 he asks the question, "What then is sin?" and he answers "Sin is the opposite of love." Is that not positive enough? "Everything we think or say or do is in one or other of these directions." How can we think, say, or do anything if it be

not something which we positively think, say, or do? "We are either living for the self at the expense of the whole, or we are fulfilling the self by serving the whole." But if we are *living for the self*, we are acting quite positively, as others may find to their cost. "Sin, therefore, is selfishness"; and, from this point, the best thing in Mr. Campbell's book is his earnest polemic against selfishness. Here, however, we come once more on the underlying unethical error. Sin *is* selfishness, and selfishness is sin. But Mr. Campbell seems to understand selfishness merely in its relation to other human beings, and not at all in its relation to God. It is well that selfishness in relation to our fellow-men should be emphasised as the very essence of sin in its manward aspects; but surely man has also a direct personal relation to God. There may be a clinging to self, a maintenance of self-will, an inward opposition of the self to God, quite apart from the manifestation of selfishness in relation to man. Only when selfishness is defined as including, not only our relation to one another but to the higher self that claims us and to God, can selfishness be said to be equivalent to sin. But take it as Mr. Campbell states it—if sin is selfishness (and it is so), that makes it something very positive. Selfishness means a clinging to self, a living

for self, instead of for the whole. It is negative as respects the good, and as regards the *true* life of the whole, but very positive as respects the separate individual life, or even as regards the lower nature, which is a positive element in man. In this very chapter it is said that "modern civilisation contains plenty of callous selfishness, gross injustice, and abominable cruelty"—which are "relics of our brute ancestry —universally deplored, which society recognises to be inimical to its well-being, and seeks to get rid of." What an absurdity is it to speak of such things as "negative" only!

But sin is also said to be "actually a quest for life, but a quest which is pursued in a wrong way. The man who is living a selfish life must think, if he thinks about it at all, that he can gratify himself in that way, that is, he can get more abundant life." It is indeed "a quest for life," and, as such, surely positive enough. Whoever heard of a negative quest? But all life is by no means the same in kind. It is only a quest for a distinctly *lower* form of life.

Sin is elsewhere described even as "a quest for God," although a blundering one. We know what Mr. Campbell has in his mind; but *sin* is nothing of the sort, and no words can be strong enough to reprobate such a statement. It is a quest for the lower self-life,—we would say for

the merely animal life, if man in that quest did not often actually sink lower than the animals, which of course generally know no better. It is *not* a quest for God, but one for the satisfaction of that entirely lower form of life which Mr. Campbell himself assures us we must leave behind us if we are to rise to God. How can that be a quest for *God*? The man himself knows perfectly well that it is nothing of the kind. The heartless *roué* who goes out to wallow in sensuality is simply seeking to gratify his own lower animal self, in opposition to both God and man. It is a positive, reckless, sinful pleasing of a positive evil self, in direct (and often in conscious) opposition to God and to the whole. And we deny that anything that represents it otherwise has any right to the title of "Theology."

Mr. Campbell goes on to speak of the "Fall," and we must very unwillingly say that he grossly caricatures the views of the average Evangelical preacher of to-day. There has been no fall, but a rise, we are assured. We are all familiar now with this statement. Sir Oliver Lodge is nearer the truth when he says there were both. Man fell from his "paradise of innocency" when he "ascended to the notion of good and evil, and perceived that certain things degraded him. But this sense of degradation would not be felt amongst the lowest among mankind—it

would only be the highest of men who, at first, would feel that. It is a sign of a rise in the "scale of existence"—but "it is also a fall, because the highest state, of course, would be to know good and evil, and not to do the evil" (Address to the Whitefield Men's Meeting). No one will assert nowadays the literal truth of the Genesis narrative; but, as Mr. Campbell himself says, it contains a truth. And truly it is an amazing "truth" that is drawn out of it by our preacher. It is nothing short of a Fall in God! "The coming of a finite creation into being is itself of the nature of a fall—a coming down from perfection to imperfection." This is where an unethical, metaphysical conception of God and the Universe leads us—back to a kind of Gnosticism. The primal action of the Divine *Love* in giving itself to become the life of others is a sort of *fall* that can be illustrated by the narrative of the Fall of man in Genesis! And yet we are told that it is *just thus* that God realises His Life as the all-perfect Love. It is difficult to hold one's pen in the face of such a travesty of Creation; so we shall abstain from using any words on the subject.

No doubt, as Mr. Campbell points out, Paul teaches that the sufferings of the creation are to be only temporary, which implies that they are

inevitable in the process of creation. But this by no means warrants such statements as we have just quoted.

The source of *sin*, we may say in a word, is the fact that we possess a separate self, which has risen from a semi-animal condition. The animal nature is essentially self-centred, and is necessarily such. To the animal it is no sin ; it only becomes sin when the light of the higher life shines upon us.

Here we must notice the needless difficulty which Mr. Campbell's unethical philosophy has landed him in with respect to the freedom of the Will, and how he *must* therefore minimise human sin. He deals with it in a previous chapter (p. 35 seq.), but also refers to it here. "In strict logic," he says, "I can find no place for the freedom of the Will. I will defy any one to do so if he knows much about the laws of thought." He may well say this *on his theory of the relation of man to God.* But this only shows that his theory is a false one. If the will be not free there is no use of talking about sin or guilt, or selfishness, or even about man as a being higher than the mechanism of nature. Therefore, we are told, we must "over-leap logic." But have we any right to do that? It means not merely over-leaping "logic" as a science, but refusing to accept

what your own reasoning leads you to. That is the leap that has to be taken. At the same time, we are assured "that no argument will convince us that we have not some power of individual self-direction and self-control." But who needs *any* argument on the subject, save those who have entangled themselves in a false doctrine about the relation of man to God? If we have really, in any true sense, a separate self, if there can be such a thing as the selfishness Mr. Campbell speaks so strongly against, there must be a separate will. Otherwise self-will, selfishness, clinging to and acting for self, would be sheerly impossible. "By the very constitution of the human mind we are compelled to take for granted a certain amount of individual initiative and self-direction" (p. 41). Better stick to "the constitution of the human mind." It is more likely to be truly grounded than the philosophy that contradicts its universal utterance. "*Perfect* freedom" is another matter altogether.

Nor, in order to maintain the reality of the human will, is it necessary to suppose, as Mr. Campbell says in the chapter on the Nature of Evil, "some thinkers who account themselves 'progressive' do, that a special act of creation took place." The will is *the man in his proper self-hood*, and this self, this will in man, is a

product of continuous evolution as surely as every human faculty is such. Man is not, as it were, a bit cut off from God, but still in some mysterious way one with Him, as the New Theology seems to think. The Divine principle of the Creation has gradually risen in its working till in man a separate self appears, which can know itself as such over against the Source of its being, while at the same time it knows that its true life is to be found in coming into voluntary ethical union with God. That is what we are created for.

> "Our wills are ours, we know not how;
> Our wills are ours, to make them Thine."

Finally, let us note how Mr. Campbell is compelled, not by facts but by his theory, to minimise the departure of the human will from the central Divine will. There are only such "tiny aberrations," as have to be taken into account in the mariner's compass, which "are no real hindrance to the sailing of the ship, and the compass itself cannot run away" (pp. 41, 42). Every sinner's conscience will condemn this. If this be so, why speak of the enormous evil of sin as selfishness? How can one possibly take such "Theology" seriously?

We have already referred to what is said concerning God's attitude towards sin.

# CHAPTER XI

# THE CROSS OF CHRIST IN THE NEW THEOLOGY

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When we come to that great subject which is, admittedly, central to all Theology, whether Old or New, namely, the Cross of Christ, we find the underlying unethical conception of God strikingly exerting its baleful influence. Three chapters of Mr. Campbell's book, and a large portion of a fourth, are occupied by a discussion of "the Atonement." It is admitted that human nature needs an Atonement, but the ordinary Christian view of what the Atonement is is strongly repudiated, and its statements are sometimes, we regret to have to say, coarsely caricatured. If indeed any accredited Christian preachers set forth the views which Mr. Campbell affirms they do, it is high time that they learned to know God, Christ, and man in some better way.

But Mr. Campbell's own view of the Cross is far from satisfactory, and robs it of its vital

saving power. Although the word "Atonement" is not, as he seems to admit, a correct rendering of any of the Biblical terms, he takes the English word "Atonement" in the sense of At-one-ment, and, of course, quite easily makes it fit into his theory of the "fundamental oneness of man with God." For the origin of this idea he goes back to that view of ancient Semitic sacrifice which some scholars maintain, as that of joyful communion with the tribal or national God, with no sense of sin entering into the matter at all. Quite so; but has he not already taught us that we are not to take our conceptions of things from their first rude and imperfect beginnings, but from their later and highest developments?

It is easy to understand how primitive peoples, with very imperfect conceptions of their deities, would eat and drink with them joyfully, without any sense of sin. The sense of sin was a later and a slow development. He admits that it became "a concomitant," but he is bent on minimising it and on bringing us back to that unethical conception of the unity of divine and human life which characterised these rude Eastern peoples, whose gods did not "bother" about sin, and whose sacrifices "did not necessarily mean that the worshipper thought he had done anything to be ashamed

of and which required to be put right." Happy days! when sin was no burden, when man was "naked and not ashamed." No need of a "fall" from that, but great need of a "rise." But will such teaching tend to raise or redeem the life of this twentieth century? Can it do anything to save us from that hydra-headed selfishness which we are truly told is the curse of the world? Will it not rather tend to rivet our fetters more firmly than ever, words and appeals notwithstanding?

"Atonement" in the Old Testament is certainly associated with sin, although it does not mean "making amends for." The word rendered "Atonement" means in some sense *a covering for sin*, a means whereby a sinner could remain in, or be restored to, the favour of his Deity—although, as to the *modus operandi*, all Old Testament students are not in agreement. Here we come into quite a different atmosphere of thought and feeling, in which, to quote the words of an Old Testament scholar who will not be deemed an "obscurantist," "the ideas of atonement and cleansing for sin replaced in a large degree those more peaceful and joyous feelings of communion with God which govern the conception of sacrifice in Israel's earlier codes." (Dr. G. A. Smith in *Modern Criticism*

*and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, p. 169.)

In like manner Dr. Stevens, who refuses to accept the ordinary evangelical view of the atonement as truly as does Mr. Campbell, writes, after criticising the various opinions on the subject: "In the Levitical code the sacrificial system has a special connection with the confession and forgiveness of sin. There can be no doubt that certain offerings were particularly designed to emphasise the reality and guilt of sin, and to keep alive in the people the sense of God's displeasure toward it." (*The Christian Doctrine of Salvation*, pp. 15, 16.) This atmosphere becomes constantly more and more ethical, till it reaches its Old Testament culmination in that grand conception of atoning vicarious sacrifice through human suffering for the sins of others which we have in the 53rd of Isaiah. There can be no doubt that at the opening of the Christian era sacrifices were regarded as having an "atoning" efficacy. *It is along this line* that we must come up to Christ if we wish to understand the Cross.

Atonement, Mr. Campbell says, represents the unit or individual giving himself to the whole and to God. This is said to be the principle of all atonement. We need not

hesitate to accept this, if only God and man's relations to God and the whole be ethically conceived. It surely implies that there is some real *opposition* to God which needs in this way to be healed. *Atonement* would otherwise be uncalled for and impossible. *What* was that opposition which had to be healed by the sacrifice of Christ? *Why* did He have to give Himself up for the sake of the whole? We are not here dealing with an ordinary person. By Mr. Campbell's own assertion, He was unique in the world, the only man, the one man who stood in complete union with God, and was therefore "the last word of God" to us. His act cannot therefore be rightly (or even reverently) compared with that of the individual who at the cost of his own life saves another from death or from some quite unethical and temporal calamity—with that of the sailor "oftener in the public-house than in the church," or with Mr. Keir Hardie's praiseworthy endeavours for the labouring community in the House of Commons. That which animates to the action may be a measure of the same spirit, but the acknowledged uniqueness of Christ, not to say His equally acknowledged incarnation of "very God," forbids such comparisons.

Mr. Campbell views the death of Christ from the *human side* merely, and affirms that

it is only from that side it is to be viewed. So viewed, it was, of course, an enormous crime, and it came about "quite naturally." But if *God* was in Christ, as He is said to have been, or, indeed, if there be any God at all save the "imperfect" immanent one, there must have been a *Divine* side to the necessity for the death of Christ as truly as a human one. In a way, no doubt, Mr. Campbell would acknowledge this. It was necessary to manifest the complete love and self-sacrifice which is "the innermost of God." "God," he says, "allowed wickedness to do its worst, and thereby made the disinterested nobleness of the character of Jesus all the clearer." "Supernatural interference would have dimmed the moral beauty of the faith, courage, and perfect self-devotion of Jesus." So this is the whole meaning of the Cross of Christ. "Once more we come to the last word of the Cosmos (of 'the Cosmos,' be it noted)—manifestation by sacrifice; and the experience of Jesus is the sum and centre of it all." "It is therefore that the name of Jesus has such power in the world,"—"because a perfectly noble and unselfish life was crowned by a perfectly sacrificial death." "The life and death together were a perfect self-offering, the offering of the unit to the whole, the individual to the race, the Son to the Father, and

therefore the greatest manifestation of the innermost of God that has ever been made to the world." "At Calvary perfect love joined issue with perfect hate, perfect goodness with perfect wickedness, and became victorious by enduring the worst and remaining pure and unchanged to the last." But after Calvary "the world had still to reckon with God"—the resurrection proved the Divine victory. "When all seemed lost, this buried life arose in power in other lives that up till then had never fully known its Divine greatness and spiritual beauty. This is the truth about the death of Jesus, and nothing needs to be added to show how great an event in the dealings of God with men it must have been. Theological word-spinning only serves to obscure its true significance. Show to the world the real Jesus: tell men how it came about that He had to die, and they cannot help but love Him."

In justice to Mr. Campbell, we have given his statement of the Cross somewhat fully. We have here some of the best sentences in his book. However far they may be from stating the full truth concerning the death of Christ, they certainly present us with one important aspect of the many-sided Cross. But, of course, they are in entire opposition to what Mr. Campbell has elsewhere laid down.

Why should there be such dire opposition to God in the world? Why should the world crucify its immanent real self when it stood embodied before it? Why should the world have, after its "murderous" deed, to "reckon with God," if God was expressing His very life in the world itself?

Mr. Campbell's view of atonement is necessarily vitiated by his one-sided conception of selfishness, as mainly affecting our human relationships, but not our relationship to God. "How can sin injure God?" he asks. But if it injures man, it surely at the same time injures Him who is the Father of men, the Guardian of humanity, the Judge of all the earth? What kind of God would He be who was indifferent to what so greatly affects His creatures? God is Love, but because He is Love He is also Holiness and Righteousness, and after all our earthly relationships have been exhausted we shall yet find that, to use a phrase of Mr. Campbell's, we have to "reckon with God." And if God does take knowledge of sin, the atonement must have some relation to God in view of sin.

*Note.*—In the Glasgow address it is very evident that atonement is chiefly regarded as affecting the relations between man and man

only. All possible activities of the soul are said to lie between two poles,—self on the one hand, the common good on the other; self on the one hand, God on the other. But rebellion against God is simply selfishness,—"living for self instead of living for others." But surely this is not all. There are the two poles *within the soul*, a higher nature which shines upon us as ideal, and seeks to win us, the will of God in some real measure made known to us, which our own will may refuse. A man's life may go *out* in unselfishness to others, while yet in relation to the higher ideal of the inner personal life it may cling to what is lower than the truly Divine as seen in Christ.

# CHAPTER XII

# THE CROSS AS JESUS VIEWED IT

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WHAT we want are the *facts* concerning the Cross; not theories, certainly not either old or new "theological word-spinning." We need not go to Paul or to the other Apostles for their interpretation of the Cross, for to the New Theology they are not authorities on the subject; it knows much better. But what Mr. Campbell has failed to do is to ask, *How Jesus Himself* viewed His Cross, how He regarded the necessity for His death in relation to God, and for the fulfilment of His mission to bring in God's Kingdom. This is the primary question apart from theories altogether. If we would understand the Cross we must see how Jesus regarded it. He did not *say* much about it, but He said enough. A careful, independent reading of the Gospel narratives leaves us in no doubt respecting the answer. And it is one that can be very simply stated, if only we care so to state it. *Jesus viewed His Cross as a*

*necessary sacrifice in view of sin, in order that the Kingdom of God which He had preached might come in power into men's hearts.* The Cross was in Christ's view a sacrifice for sin, not to make amends for it by suffering (which, we grant, has been too often taken as the meaning of "atonement" in this connection), but because of sin, and in order to do away with it.

We must be brief; but the subject is one of supreme importance. It is the acceptance of death by "the only man," the incarnate Son of God, He who was "very God." Only think of it!—we cannot surely deal lightly with such an amazing fact.

What the Gospels show is this. When Jesus saw that He was doomed to meet death instead of ascending the throne of a spiritual Israel, it was a solemn and mysterious experience to Him. What could be its meaning? He had no consciousness of *sin*,—why should He have to die? His own words show us that He accepted it all in the light of the Old Testament (His Bible), "that the Scriptures might be fulfilled," "as it was written of Him." Therefore He regarded it all as coming *in the will of God, His Father.* His death was to be "a ransom" for others. He felt that, in some sense, it came even directly from the hand of the loving Father, as is shown

by the saying which He quoted: "*I* will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad." Therefore also His prayer in Gethsemane, that, *if it was possible*, that cup might pass from Him, "nevertheless *not My will*, but *Thine*, be done." He accepted His death as that sacrifice through which alone true, spiritual salvation could come to men.

Although the great picture of vicarious sacrifice, with its redeeming results in the 53rd of Isaiah, may have had no direct reference to Jesus personally (as Mr. Campbell somewhat needlessly argues), in no one did the ideal there presented find such complete fulfilment. According to St. Luke's Gospel, in a saying which a hostile criticism has as yet vainly endeavoured to shake, Jesus quoted from it a passage bearing on His death: "For I say unto you, that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me 'And He was reckoned with the transgressors'; for that which concerneth Me hath fulfilment." He must have interpreted His death in the light of what was "written" of His great prototype: "He was wounded for *our* transgressions, he was bruised for *our* iniquities, the chastisement of *our* peace was upon *him*, and with *his* stripes we are healed; the Lord hath made to light on him the iniquity of us all. When thou shall make his

soul (or life) an offering for sin (a guilt-offering) [or if his soul should present a guilt-offering] he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure (or purpose) of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied, by the knowledge concerning him shall my righteous servant justify many (or make many righteous); and he shall bear their iniquities."

Nothing was more fitted than this to explain to the human mind of Jesus the meaning of His death, and to create within His soul the confidence that He expressed to His disciples that after and by means of it, the Kingdom of God should surely come. "When His soul (or life) should be made an offering for sin," then only should the purpose of the Lord prosper in His hand, then and then only should the Kingdom come in its spiritual, saving power.

But, indeed, however much we may choose to ignore it, Jesus explained the purpose of His death to His disciples in terms which for them could have had but one meaning, and which we find not only in the Gospels but also in St. Paul.

In the words of Professor Harnack (who will not be judged an "obscurantist"): "That Jesus at the celebration of the Lord's Supper described His death as a sacrifice which He should offer

for the forgiveness of sin, is clear from the account of Paul." The phrase "for the forgiveness of sin" is indeed liable to be misunderstood; we should say, rather, "in connection with the forgiveness of sin." He compared His body to that of the lamb that had been sacrificed in Egypt, under *cover* of the blood of which their forefathers had been preserved from the doom that fell on the Egyptians, and which was the prelude to their redemption. And His Blood, He said, was that of "the Covenant," the New Covenant, "poured out for many." St. Matthew adds, "for the remission of sins." Both the Paschal Lamb and the Covenant Sacrifice contained a cleansing (or atoning) element in relation to sin. The New Covenant was *founded on forgiveness*, and guaranteed the coming of God to dwell in His people. It was the same thing as the coming of the Kingdom of God, and His Blood was that which should ratify it and make it effectual.

His death therefore was in His own view a necessity laid on Him *by God* for the spiritual redemption of His people, and it had a relation to the coming of the Divine forgiveness to men with saving power, or of God in the full grace and power of the Kingdom. Now, what did *death* mean to Christ? To the Jew, nurtured on the Old Testament, it was the doom of sin. To Christ, all evil, all suffering, was due to sin.

Therefore when He healed He said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." It was "Satan" who had "bound the poor woman these forty years." Sickness and death were the result of sin. But *He* had no evil—no consciousness of sin; therefore the death that He saw approaching Him, instead of the throne, could not be because of evil on His own part. He must be meant to die for the sins of others, "on behalf of" others, as He said, that through His death for them they might be saved, as was the case with the servant of God in Isaiah. He had preached the Kingdom; yet it had not come in its power. He had proclaimed the forgiving love of God; yet scarcely any had believed in it,—there was something standing between man and God, keeping back the Kingdom. It was *sin*. Man's sin must be acknowledged ere the Divine forgiveness could come to men with saving power. The death that was the doom of sinful man must be set forth in His Person, and bowed to by Him in man's name, before even men's own consciences, awakened to a due sense of sin, would suffer them to believe in Divine forgiveness, or that forgiveness come to them so as really to bring the Kingdom of God into their hearts. This must be the meaning of that coming of death to Him over whom it had no claim. He accepted His dark experience as "bearing the sins" of His people in order

that they might be brought into right relation to God, and so God's Kingdom come in its *full* spiritual power.

The death that He had thus to face was not merely the bodily dissolution that comes to all embodied beings, to animal as well as to man, to saint as truly as to sinner—that which we have come to call "physical death." No; it was just *death*, with no hint of resurrection save for the righteous. There might be *existence* in Sheol, but there was no *life*. "The main point is," says Professor A. B. Davidson (with respect to "Death" in the Old Testament), "that *the relation between the dead person and God is cut off*. This is what gave death its significance to the religious mind. Fellowship with God ceases. 'In death there is no remembrance of Thee: in Sheol who shall give Thee thanks? For Sheol cannot praise Thee; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth' (Is. xxxviii. 18)." (Art. "Eschatology" in Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible.*) It meant *separation from God*—to the sinner, or the man after the flesh merely, it meant exclusion from the Kingdom of God.

If Mr. Campbell had thought of this he would not have spoken so rashly and unwisely of the "pious nonsense" that has been written concerning Gethsemane. If "death" meant to Christ what that most competent scholar whom

we have just quoted tells us it meant in the Old Testament (and it was by what was "written" that Jesus went); if separation from God was involved in His acceptance of death in our name, we can surely understand why Jesus should not only have recoiled from it with horror, but have endured such agony of soul and sent up such pleadings to the Father as are recorded in the Gospels. Yet—and here is the greatness, the completeness, the full atoning and redeeming power of the sacrifice—even *this* uttermost sacrifice of Himself He was prepared to make, if it was the Father's will; if only thus men could be saved from sinfulness, and the Kingdom of God come in power. He was willing in this most literal sense "*to lay down His life*," that life which in its communion with God meant so much to Him—"for us all."[1]

Nothing, we believe, has done more to obscure the unique significance of the death of Christ and the greatness of His sacrifice, to hide the real and necessary doom of the sinful life of the flesh,—the selfish life which *must* die, which cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, which, as Mr. Campbell tells us, is the source of all evil, and is necessarily "death-

[1] We have what are to some extent corresponding and illustrative instances in Moses, who was willing to be blotted out of God's book if only the people might be forgiven; and in Paul, who was willing to be made *anathema* (separated from God) for his brethren's sake after the flesh.

ward" in its tendency,—and so to weaken the sense of the need of the great salvation which God has provided in Christ, than the way we have got into of thinking of physical death merely as that which Christ had to meet, or as the doom or last consequence of sin. Christ's experience on the Cross confirms the interpretation we have given; for, although God certainly did not "punish" His Son, events were allowed so to run their course that Jesus did actually, if only for a moment, experience that sense of separation from God which is the last, bitterest drop in the cup of doom? If God was really *in* Christ, if up to that moment He had enjoyed the sense of that Presence which He was then left without, no other explanation of it seems possible than that He was there suffering what sin really deserved to suffer.

Nor is there anything marvellous or unreasonable in the fact that such death or separation from God should be the last result of sin. Sin, as Mr. Campbell assures us, is "death-ward" in its very nature. That cannot refer to mere bodily death. Sin is in its very nature separation from God, although we do not in this life always realise it. Certainly, sin cannot be suffered to enter heaven, or to perpetuate itself anywhere eternally. If man cannot be saved from sin, this *must* be its

doom. The lower, animal, self-centred life cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. In the very nature of things it cannot do so. Either sin must die in the sinner, or the sinner must die. That there may be possibilities of salvation beyond this life is in no contradiction to this. Death is not annihilation.

Physical death—bodily dissolution—is not in itself a doom at all, but a necessary, an inevitable, a beneficent fact—apart from which none of us would have been here to-day.

The purpose of this sacrifice was certainly not to propitiate God personally, as if God were like an angry man. While we cannot sympathise with the light, and we must say irreverent, way in which Mr. Campbell speaks of the relation of God to human sin, we are at one with him in repudiating as un-Christian the representations that have been made of the world as lying under the wrath and curse of God, and of God Himself as mainly concerned "to mark iniquity." While not only Paul, but Christ Himself, taught that there was that in the nature of God and in the constitution of His world which has been described as "the wrath of God against sin," that wrath only goes forth because God is Love, and because sin is that which injures His children and is opposed to the purpose

of His Love. Certain it is that the sinful, self-centred, animal man cannot be at one with God, cannot be truly a Son of God, cannot inherit His eternal kingdom. But to Christ (and to Paul) God was ever the loving and forgiving Father of men. Jesus came *proclaiming* the Divine forgiveness. Yet the result made it clear that that forgiveness could only come to men so that they could become assured of it, and saved from sin and self, through the Cross. It was God Himself that gave up His Son to that death for our sakes. Not only was this so to Christ's own consciousness, but it is the distinct teaching of both Paul and "John." The great gospel text is: "*God* so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son." It was God who made the sacrifice, and, instead of that sacrifice in any sense making or inducing God to forgive, it was the supreme proof of His forgiving love (see closing Chapter).

But, all the same, it might have a very necessary relation to the justice and holiness of God, which are the outcome of His love, and with which He in His love is one. Mr. Campbell decries the idea that "Justice must be satisfied before mercy can operate." There is, of course, a wrong and misleading way of stating this. Justice and mercy in God are

never in antagonism. But what would mercy be apart from justice? It would be unmercifulness, as well as injustice, to some. It is God's justice that guards His worlds. Sin forgiven out of harmony with justice would be impossible, and were it possible it would be no boon to the sinner, and could not possibly *save* him. God has so made us, or, as Mr. Campbell would say, is so immanently in us, that we cannot take such a forgiveness with confidence to our hearts; that is, if we have a deep sense of the evil of sin—which has been a slow development in the race. Mr. Campbell's friends of the Labour Party will quickly (and rightly) tell us that it is not Mercy they want, but *Justice*. Justice in the actual practical world of personal life (while one with love) must ever be supreme.

> "Justice conquers evermore,
> Justice, after as before,—
> And he who battles on her side,
> God, though he were ten times slain,
> Crowns him victor glorified—
> Victor over death and pain."

Christ became "crowned with glory," because He stood for righteousness, for justice, even to the uttermost sacrifice of Himself for its sake.

It was such an acknowledgment of sin on the part of Him who was the one true man, the

sinless Head and Representative of a sinful humanity, as was necessary—not before God could *forgive* sinners, but before His forgiveness could go forth so as to save them from sin to that righteousness which alone could bless them either in time or in eternity. Forgiveness, apart from that manifestation of righteousness in view of the sin of the world, would not have saved men, nor could it have been confidently believed in by them.

It was all in order to *save* men from sin and selfishness,—to bring the Kingdom of God into our hearts and into the world. The man who clings to the Cross for a *merely* selfish salvation entirely misapprehends its purpose, and is *not* saved. The Cross was truly designed to make men "at one with God and with the whole." Christ in His perfect offering of Himself there in our name *did* bring man as represented in Himself into full ethical unity with God and the whole. This was the atonement in His Person. But it could only be such by His acknowledgment of our sin, and it was meant to save us from sin, and to bring each one of us into the same ethical unity with God and with the whole. Till sin was acknowledged as sin—as that which separated man from God — man could not stand in real ethical unity with God. If we consider now

*how* this salvation can be effected, we shall see further the necessity there was for that death of Christ in relation to sin, and how entirely inadequate the New Theology is to effect that which we most of all need, and which it says it comes to do.

*Note.* — There are few more competent scholars or more "advanced" theologians than Professor Harnack. Let us therefore quote a few sentences concerning the Cross as a sacrifice from his *What is Christianity?* "No reflection of the 'reason,' no deliberation of the 'intelligence,' will ever be able to expunge from the moral ideas of mankind the conviction that injustice and sin deserve to be punished, and that everywhere that the just man suffers, an atonement is made that puts us to shame and purifies us. It is a conviction which is impenetrable, for it comes out of those depths in which we feel ourselves to be a unity, and out of the world which lies behind the world of phenomena. Mocked and denied as though it had long perished, this truth is indestructibly preserved in the moral experience of mankind" (p. 162).

# CHAPTER XIII

# SALVATION FROM SELFISHNESS

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Salvation, according to the New Theology is rightly (although inconsistently and imperfectly) described as salvation from selfishness to the life of love—the life of self-sacrifice —the life of God within us. But *is this a simple or easy matter?* Is it not just the greatest practical problem in the universe? To save a man from *himself*,—just think of it! True, there is a deeper, truer self which each man is potentially; but it is the other, lower, self-centred self, that is in possession, and the problem is how is that higher, Diviner self to become the actual living self of the man, instead of the lower self. There is nothing more deeply rooted than *self*, in the sense in which we need to be saved from it. There is nothing more difficult to get wholly away from. Man, in order to live on the earth, amidst his physical and animal surroundings, in order to have and hold his footing in the world that he

entered—in order to appear at all, in fact—had first of all to be deeply rooted in that lower animal nature of "the flesh," and then to be raised out of it to that higher life of *God* in man. How can it be effected? Man is first of all a sharer in an animal nature, which is essentially a self-centred nature. The self which is the source of the sin that is the divisive element in his life is not merely what is described (not altogether correctly) as "the remains of the brute inheritance," but is the *very central principle* of the lower life. If a higher principle is to dominate the life there must be an actual *death* of the lower self-principle. Selfishness cannot be the principle of the life of God in man; the self-centred life is doomed to die. It was *this* that was bowed to in our name by Christ, in our flesh, on His Cross—that necessary doom of the self life, *in order that we might thereby be saved from that life and its doom, and that the Kingdom of God might come into our hearts and into the world.* It was in order that the complete oneness of humanity with God there represented in His Person might be realised in us all. Man in Him there died to "the flesh," so that "the Spirit" should be the principle of his life. It was no mere scenic display, nor juridical transaction, but a great ethical act

and manifestation which, seen by men in its truth, should become the power of God unto their salvation. It was meant to become, not merely the Cross on which Jesus was crucified for our sakes, but the Cross by means of which the lower self in every man must be crucified. But how is this to be brought about? It is when a man sees and acknowledges the desert of sin (or selfishness) as set forth in that Cross of sacrifice, when he sees and acknowledges the evil and the evil desert of sin, and homologates, as it were, Christ's *representative* act, it is when he believes on that "Son of God who loved *me* and gave Himself up for me," and through experience of the Divine forgiveness has "the love of God" there revealed "shed abroad in his heart," that the self-principle receives its death-wound, and the new principle of love is quickened in the soul. It may take long to die, but by this means the process is begun.

*Self* is a much more subtle principle in man than Mr. Campbell and the men who are to save the world by means of the New Theology seem to suppose. Truly was it written that "the serpent was more subtle than all the beasts of the field," and it is only *death* to self that can save a man from that "old serpent" within him.

To be saved from self means very much

more than to be self-sacrificingly enthusiastic in the cause of social reform. A man may be a sincere and ardent Socialist, not merely in words but in practice, and yet be in some aspects of his life a most selfish man, an enemy to the happiness of others, to the higher life of his fellows, and in himself unfit for the Kingdom of God. So, of course, may a theologian, whether of the old type or of the new. It is very easy to deceive ourselves, and it is hard, hard work to get rid of self. When we seem to accomplish it in one aspect of our life, the throne may remain firmly established in another. The love that God is, and which would fain live in us, seeks to find its manifestation in many other ways than in devotion to social reformation, desirable and even essential as that is. We need to be "at one with the whole" in more than the merely earthly aspects of life, at one with God and with His purpose to make men not only to live happily here, but to become "partakers in the Divine Nature," and the heirs of an Eternal Kingdom, apart from which a Kingdom of God —one in this world only—would have no meaning or ultimate value either to God or to man. The coming of the Kingdom of God means very much more than the establishment of a perfect external social system, were it possible

for such a system ever to be established from without merely. If, as Mr. Campbell has said, "the Church has nothing to do with preparing men for heaven," then we must say, not only that "Christ has died in vain," but that God has created us in vain, for nothing is more certain than that all that is of the earth merely must at length come to nothingness.

If now we turn for a moment to the *results* which followed the death of Christ, we shall see the necessity that there was for His sacrifice, and its efficacy to save men,—its high place in the wisdom and love of God; we shall see the Cross to be in truth the great deed of God in Christ for the salvation of the world. It *did* make "the New Covenant" effectual; it *did* bring the Kingdom of God into men's hearts in spiritual power. Mr. Campbell himself shall be our witness here. "The immediate effect of the life and death of Jesus upon His followers," he says, "was to make them more or less like Him, and to fill them with a similar desire to get men to live the life of love which is the life of God. They felt themselves inspired by the same Spirit, the Holy Spirit of truth and love, and exalted above all fear for their own safety and all desire to live for themselves alone. They loved their Lord so much that their lives became one with His in the

work of saving the world." Was not this something wonderful which was thus witnessed in these men? What a deliverance from selfishness! Surely St. Paul was justified in describing it as *a new creation.* Although God had long been working towards it, we have here the manifestation of a new stage in the evolution of His purpose in humanity; a new epoch in the life of man. A study of the "social results of early Christianity" (as, for example, in Schmidt's handy volume) will show how the new spirit spread itself till the whole of life was influenced by it. This was the result of the life, and especially of the death, of Jesus on the Cross. But *how* did these men regard the Cross? This is the crucial question here. *Without exception* — notwithstanding these varieties of modes of statement which Mr. Campbell has been at the pains to exhibit,—without exception, we say, that Cross was for them *the ackowledgment of man's sin,* a sacrifice for sin, a manifestation of God's righteousness and of His judgment on sin. And *it was for their salvation.* Here we have the needed psychological dynamic, in an appeal to that *self* which, although not the only element in our nature, is undoubtedly the strongest and the most deeply rooted. Here we have the manifestation of the Divine Wisdom in this great provision for

the salvation of men from self to the life of Love. That Cross of Christ by its appeal to the self has at the same time the marvellous power to save men *from* self and to quicken in them the life of the true children of God. It is, we repeat, the conviction of sin that that Cross is designed to create, the manifestation of the forgiving love of God therein, and the acceptance of that Cross as representing the death which I, as a man after the flesh, or the lower self merely, must die, to save me from which *Christ* died, that in Christianity become within the soul "the power of God unto Salvation." Self, it is true, rebels against such a humbling view of the Cross, its ambassadors may sometimes feel ashamed to preach it, so very contrary is it, at first sight, to the likings of the natural self; it has always been an offence to many, and by some has been counted "foolishness," but at the same time it has always proved itself to be that "foolishness of God which is wiser than men, and that weakness of God which is stronger than men." It is, we believe, a revolt from the Cross so conceived that is the real foundation of all this New Theology, as well as of the readiness to listen to it; but for this very reason it must in the long-run share the fate of every system that has preferred the wisdom of men to that of God as expressed in Christ

and His Cross, as a Sacrifice in view of Sin and for men's real Salvation.

No right-thinking person can fail to sympathise with Mr. Campbell in his denunciation of selfishness wherever it is to be found, and in his desire to bring in the Kingdom of God—the reign of all Justice and Righteousness and Love to the world. It must be confessed that Evangelicalism has too greatly failed to give right direction to the love which its Gospel can undoubtedly kindle in the heart. Whatever has tended to lead men to imagine that "Salvation" is something that can be selfishly enjoyed, instead of being essentially Salvation from self, needs to be removed. But we need to be careful lest at the same time we put out the fire that alone can kindle the new life in the heart. The New Theology provides nothing that can uproot selfishness, and, if it be not uprooted, we might have the most complete emancipation from social injustice and the most perfect outward form of society imaginable, and yet men would still be miserable, and the need of salvation as clamant as ever. If God's own remedy for sin—the Cross of Christ rightly viewed and applied—cannot destroy selfishness and bring His Kingdom here, it is vain to imagine that any appeal that *man* can make to man can ever accomplish it.

It is highly desirable that we should recognise "the fundamental unity of all life," in its Divine source and in its ideal; that in the very gift of Life there is something of God in us all; that, deeper than the animal self, there is a Divine Self that would fain possess us; that the ideal of our life is sonship towards God, conformity to Christ, and, therefore, brotherhood, towards one another. To enforce these truths may awaken interest in religion. But you may appeal to men in the name of Immanence merely, as earnestly as you will, and you may point them to the glorious example of Jesus as the Prince of martyrs to the cause of Truth and Righteousness, yet you will never thus move their souls to their depths so as to save them from that *self* which is the seat of sin; you will never thus bring them into that unity with God and man that Jesus stood in, and which He calls us to share; you will never thus establish that real Kingdom of God, which is meant indeed for the earth, but which can only find its fruition in the eternal sphere. It is because we (in common with many others of those of whom Mr. Campbell speaks somewhat disdainfully) are as anxious as he can possibly be to see God's will done on the earth, and men made partakers of a spiritual and eternal salvation,

that we feel bound to point out how entirely inadequate is this New Theology to do this great and needed work. While recognising fully the need of theological reconstruction, and believing that what Mr. Campbell aims at, and, we think, surely really *means*, is good, yet we cannot regard this New Theology, as it has been stated, as a step in the right direction. It is a retrograde movement to be deplored, not a forward one to welcome and rejoice in. At the same time, the very extremeness and (in our opinion) erroneousness of its statements, have called wide-spread attention to it and so to religion itself, and in the long-run the truth will shine forth clearly. For "we can do nothing against the Truth but for the Truth," and it is always *the Truth* that serves God and that makes men free.

## CHAPTER XIV

# "LAST THINGS"; THE KINGDOM AND THE CHURCH; AUTHORITY IN RELIGION

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## "LAST THINGS"; THE KINGDOM AND THE CHURCH; AUTHORITY IN RELIGION

HAVING now discussed the chief matters involved in this New Theology, we shall deal very briefly with Mr. Campbell's concluding chapters. These represent far less departure from what is commonly held by thoughtful Christians—although some unfortunate phrases are still to be met with. There are a few points, however, that may be noted, and we must also consider the question of the "Authority of the Scriptures" as it is dealt with by Mr. Campbell, before concluding with an attempt at a positive statement of what we can reasonably believe to-day.

It is well that we should recognise that Salvation, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell, are primarily spiritual conceptions and experiences; that salvation is not from mere future punishment, but from self and sin; that Heaven must be in us if we are to be in Heaven; that we

form our own Heaven or Hell as we form our own characters. It is most true that "whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap":

> "The tissues of the life to be
> We weave in colours all our own;
> And in the field of destiny
> We reap as we have sown."

It is true also that Forgiveness does not mean the remission of all penalty. But it does mean the removal of that which is the most serious consequence of sin—the removal of the sense of separation from God. And this reunion with Him ensures that whatever we may suffer shall be made to work for our good.

Mr. Campbell is always in danger of falling back into what are really unethical conceptions. He does so when he says that "an unselfish desire to minister to the common good" is "the true salvation." Salvation is much more than that. A man may have a perfectly unselfish desire so to act, but in his own soul be far from oneness with the Ethical Source of his being, or God. He has an ideal self of his own to realise quite apart from the common good. It is true that he cannot realise that higher self in separation from the common life; but he may be fully interested in seeking "the common good" while comparatively indifferent to the moral and spiritual qualities

that ought to characterise his own proper self. Mr. Campbell himself goes on to show that "salvation" or "conversion" has "often meant something much more pronounced than this." But if so, where those deeper elements were lacking, "salvation" must have been superficial and incomplete.

It is surely also going too far to "say frankly that there is no such thing as punishment [in the usual sense of the word, of course], no far-off Judgment Day, no Great White Throne, and no Judge external to ourselves." This looks very much like saying that there is no God over all. We must conceive these matters differently, but they stand for realities. Again, universal salvation is dogmatically affirmed. Although a man may prepare for himself "a harvest of pain, sooner or later the Divine life within him, the truer, deeper self, will assert itself against the divisive efforts of sin." How does he know? Is the Divine life really *in* the man? Here once more we seem to fall to the unethical. But there is no room for doubt about the matter we are assured. "It is just as impossible for a man to go on eternally living apart from the universal life, as it is for a sand castle to shut out the ocean." This may be true in a sense that Mr. Campbell does not think of. But is the separate self

*only* like "a sand castle." Is there no more individuality in man, and no more power of resistance than that? Well, then, it must be said that man is a very poor thing, hardly worth saving at all; certainly not worth all the travail of creation and the sufferings of Christ. "The returning tide will sweep down the puny barriers and destroy everything that tends to separate between the soul and God." When shall it do so? and, Why does it not do so now? What "returning tide" is to do this great work? "For, after all, what is our life but God's?" Where, then, the need for creating us, and of passing us through all the painful discipline of time? Again we are down to the unethical. Mr. Campbell speaks of "the deeper self" as if it were a *thing* or an entity *in* the man, and sure to be in him for ever, altogether apart from the conditions of life. When the man who has in life rejected this deeper self dies, where is it? Nay, where is he—the man? Inevitable immortality and a perpetual relation to God are taken for granted. But have we any right to do so? Is it all so certain as this? Mr. Campbell quotes Paul's saying, "Whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap." But why stop there? "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap *corruption*." Does not Mr. Campbell himself

assure us that selfishness means *death.* Yet it is said to be certain that after he has reaped this harvest of corruption, he shall sow again, this time *to the Spirit*? How does he know? We *hope* so; but *is it wise or kind to men to assure them of what we really do not know*? We know the way to "life": better urge them to take it *now.* This was what Jesus did. To the man who asked, "Are there few that be saved," He answered "Strive you—'Agonise' —to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in and shall not be able." This does not exclude a hope beyond; but He who was "the last word" about God, spake no other word to men than this. Would it not be best to follow His example? If *assured* that all *must* come right at last, how much will men care? Shall we hope *thus* to save the world from selfishness? We are just as honest as Mr. Campbell is, and because we desire to be honest we cannot hold out as a certainty what is only a hope.

But we must pass on—leaving much that is interesting and suggestive concerning Death and the life beyond, and the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ unnoticed, to speak of *the Kingdom of God* and *the Church.* With much that Mr. Campbell says here, we are personally in sympathy. Its limitations have been already

to some extent referred to. He tells us that what Jesus meant by "the Kingdom of God was something much too simple for the theologians," who "have endeavoured to twist and torture it out of all recognition." The poor theologians! Well, what was it? "The meaning of Jesus is perfectly clear and simple. It is that if a Kingdom of universal brotherhood is ever to be realised on earth it can only come by the operation of universal goodwill?" We fear that this is much too simple even for Jesus. Let any one read the Gospels and say honestly, was this *all* that Jesus meant by the Kingdom of God? Was it not rather the reign of *all that God is*, first in the individual heart and then in the world, with its fruition in Eternity in lives that had proved *fit* for the Eternal Kingdom?

Paul's interest was also centred, it is said, in the coming of an outward Kingdom on the earth. But is it not Paul who says that "the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit"? This is very much deeper than the Kingdom of the New Theology; and it is *this* that the soul, awakened to reality, craves for, and will not be satisfied without. To offer such souls an outward Kingdom is to proffer a stone for bread.

Mr. Campbell says truly that *the Church*,

using the word in its primitive sense, exists "to save the world," "to help to realise the Kingdom of God by preaching and living the fellowship of love." This is true; but in order to this, must not those who compose this Church be first of all "saved" themselves? Mr. Campbell sneers at the idea of "snatching men as brands from the burning," and getting them "ready for a future heaven." He is right in repudiating the conception of the world in relation to God which has too often been presented by evangelical preachers—that of "a ruined world, which has somehow baffled and disappointed God, a failure of a world, which, when the cup of its iniquity is full will be utterly destroyed at a general judgment." But if sin, that is selfishness, be the *deadly* thing that he says it is, we cannot surely be too much in earnest in seeking our own salvation and that of others from it; and that, too, for the sake of the world. It will probably be found that it has been the men who have been so "saved" that have been the real salt of the earth and the truest "saviours of others." When he says that the Chuch has sought "to persuade as many as possible to *believe* something or other in order to secure salvation in a better world," he must surely know that he is caricaturing what some of the best men who

have ever lived, and the truest friends to "the whole" in this present life, John Wesley, for example, have sought to do. No intelligent Christian preacher has ever told men that they can be saved by merely *believing* something. The Church may have been too anxious about its Creeds, but it has never, as a whole, said that mere belief in them *saved* men.

Mr. Campbell admits that the world is a better place to live in because of the gradual and cumulative redemptive effort of the Christian *Ecclesia*, the Church of Jesus. But on the whole it has failed in its mission "to make the world better and gladder and worthier of God." And yet the world is God's own self-expression! It can only be made better and gladder and worthier of God as it is saved from the sin that separates from God and our fellows, and this the Church *as a whole* has sought to do for men. But the Church, we are told, in a sentence we have already referred to, has "nothing whatever to do with preparing men for a world to come"; its real mission is to men in relation to this present world. Does he really believe that to shut out all pressing relation to a higher, purer, and better life above and beyond the present, to deal with men as if they were superior animals merely, with but felicity as the goal of their life, will help to save and bless

this present world? He knows history and human nature better than that. Such utterances may please a certain section of the public, but they will not pass, even with them, for Christianity. Jesus, indeed, had no other Gospel than that of the Kingdom of God. But the Kingdom of God meant much more to Jesus than it does to the New Theology.

But the churches have failed because "our modern civilisation, with all its boasted advance on the past, is still unchristian. It puts a premium on selfishness." "Modern industrialism is cruel and unjust, and directly incites men to self-seeking. The weak and unfortunate have to go to the wall." This is sadly true. Although "the Church" cannot be held wholly responsible for this, she has been too indifferent to it, and has in no small degree belied the Gospel of Divine Love she has preached. There have been more words than deeds, and even the words have too often been addressed to the wrong persons. The Church has too greatly cared for itself and left the poor, the suffering, and the oppressed too much to care for themselves as best they could. But this is not because the Church has not preached love, but because the love has not received proper direction. While we cannot agree with Mr. Campbell that it is "our

business to show that the religion of Jesus is primarily a gospel for this life and only secondarily for the life to come," we do agree with him that the Church itself needs in many respects to be christianised, and to set itself more earnestly than it has ever yet done in modern times to christianise Society — in a word, to be saved from itself.

We shall not touch on Miracle or Prayer, with neither of which subjects Mr. Campbell deals fully; but we earnestly endorse his remark that "one thing that urgently needs to be done for the young people in our Sunday Schools and various Christian Societies all over the world, is to issue a series of well-written manuals, presenting in a succinct form the best results of biblical criticism." We are certainly missing great opportunities in our Sunday Schools. "The way the Bible is taught to young people at present is most regrettable, for in after years it leads them to doubt and distrust the very foundations of Christianity." We know that there are honourable exceptions to this; but, all the same, what Mr. Campbell says here needs to be laid to heart.

This leads naturally, in the last place, to the subject of *the Authority of the Bible.* Mr. Campbell is right, we think, in saying that there has been far too much reliance placed on merely

external authority, and too little on the witness to truth within our own souls. The appeal to the letter of Scripture has indeed much to answer for. Sometimes it is not even to the *actual* letter of Scripture, but to a misleading translation of it, and sometimes to what has in its original setting quite another meaning. The instances which he cites: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," and "The soul that sinneth it shall die," are apt illustrations of what is really an ignorant and misleading use of Scripture, and for its commonness preachers must take blame to themselves for not more courageously instructing their people.

But we think that Mr. Campbell goes to the other extreme when he says absolutely, "the true seat of authority is within, not without, the human soul." The true seat of authority is surely in *the Truth*, ultimately in God. It becomes authority for us as Truth in so far as we are able to discern it to be Truth. But while all Truth is ultimately one, it does not follow that it is all at any time present to the human soul. Man has grown in capacity for perceiving Truth just as he has grown in other respects. The Truth is forever above us all, but some natures are more fitted to perceive it than others. When it is said that "the real test of Truth is the response that it awakens

within the soul," it must not be forgotten that that response depends in a large measure on the nature and condition of that particular soul. Those who have perceived the truth can state what they have seen and so enable others to perceive it also. Or, to borrow an illustration, just as a man near the speaker can hear what he says, and repeat or interpret it to the crowd behind him, so the soul that is near to God may hear His voice more distinctly than his fellows, and, in turn, speak it forth, so that they also may hear the same voice. This is the function of the inspired man or prophet, and prophecy was not limited to Old Testament times, nor has it ceased to-day. This is why a special deference ought to be paid to the Bible writers. The large human element in the Bible is to be distinctly recognised. It is true that "God inspires men, not books"; but if the books were not written, how should we know anything about such inspiration? Besides, while St. Paul and the other New Testament writers viewed things through the medium of their intellectual furnishing, and could not possibly have done anything else, they stood in immediate relation to that spiritual "down-pouring" which, it is acknowledged, visited the world in Christ; they were the recipients of the Holy Spirit's inspiration in all its pristine fresh-

ness and power, and therefore their word matters much more to us than that of those who lived in later times.

Therefore it will not do to say, "Never mind what the Bible says about this or that, if you are in search for truth, but trust the voice of God within you." God indeed speaks to us to-day as truly as to the men of old, and there is always a danger of putting the Bible between our souls and the living God. God must be *my* God, not the God of Bible writers merely—all to me that He was to them. But to believe that God speaks to me is to believe that He *did* actually speak to them. And it is certain that God cannot contradict Himself, or say something to me quite different from what He said to them. While, therefore, I must distinguish what in the Bible is merely human from what is Divine, if God speaks to man at all, I must believe that the real truth and substance of what He said to others cannot be contradicted by what He says to me. Otherwise, what warrant have I for saying that God speaks in any way to men at all? And to know what that real truth and substance is, I must exert myself and use every means within my reach for its discovery, including a sincere desire not only to know but to do the will of God, and earnest prayer to Him, of whom it

has been truly said, "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. We have not because we ask not." Each man has God Himself to go to, and we are not left to the mercy of any man or of any Theology.

# CHAPTER XV

# A POSITIVE FAITH

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## A POSITIVE FAITH

THERE is naturally a strong demand on the part of many to-day for a positive statement of what we really can believe in the present state of our knowledge. Of course, anyone can only attempt to give this as his own personal belief. In the foregoing criticism I have sought to be constructive as well as critical. I trust that I shall not be accused of lack of modesty if I here adopt the first person singular, and endeavour to set forth briefly what I, as one who has sought to follow the Truth at any cost, regard as a reasonable Christian faith, one which I believe others also might find, on due consideration, to be such.

I begin by again placing in the foreground the *fact of salvation* through faith in God's reconciliation (or Atonement) of the world to Himself in Christ and His Cross. I do so because this is really what distinguishes Christianity, and because it has been so abundantly

attested in experience. I believe that there has been no better attested fact in the world's history. It has proved itself during all the Christian centuries, and amongst all varieties of peoples, to be able to give rest to the soul, truer and fuller life, a consciousness of "oneness with God and the whole," and has thus shown itself to belong to the Divine order of the Universe, to be that which man needs to lift him out of the lower, self-centred life into that life of love which is the life of God in man.

This faith, I would next point out, does not rest primarily on any *Scriptures*. The New Testament was the *product* of this faith, not its foundation. There was no such Book in the hands of the earliest Christians. But there was in them a glowing enthusiasm of love for God and for humanity, kindled by simple faith in Christ and His Cross. This Christian spirit and life have come down to us, not merely as inscribed on the pages of a Book, but as written in the hearts and lives of men and women, "living epistles known and read of all men." While, therefore, the Scriptures are to be prized in the manner already pointed out, our faith does not *depend* on them, and no criticism can touch it. Give criticism the freest play: it cannot harm the faith.

Of course, this experience implies certain

facts which have made it possible. But these facts may be at first merely (consciously or unconsciously) *assumed*, or accepted traditionally (that is without question) as true. So accepted, they are found to do for us what it is affirmed the Gospel is able to effect. If, when that Gospel is put to the test, we find it to be true in experience,—if, for example, through faith in God, as He is believed to have revealed Himself in Christ and His Cross, the burdened Conscience finds a peace which it could not otherwise find, and at the same time a new, liberating, uplifting, and unifying power enters the life, it becomes almost impossible to doubt that that which has so verified itself in experience is of God. It is that higher influx of *life* which we needed. And if afterwards, when doubts arise, we betake ourselves to rational consideration of the facts, and find them to abide in the light of all the knowledge we can reach, we come to stand on a basis of certainty which cannot possibly be stronger, and we become able so to relate all our new knowledge to these facts as to find them only illustrated and made clearer to us.

To those who may not have had as yet the experience, the facts must, of course, be presented in such a way as to invite their rational acceptance. This is the need for a rational

theology. The basal facts of Christianity are these three: 1st, The fact of *God* in a certain relation to the world and ourselves; 2nd, The fact of the Incarnation and supreme revelation of God in Jesus Christ; and 3rd, The fact of Christ's representative act on the Cross as the Son of God and the Head of our Humanity.

1. *Belief in God.*—We do not all believe in God in the Christian sense, but no man can help believing in a Being or Power that is the Source of the Universe and of ourselves, or the Ultimate Reality. What that Source is, is so far revealed in the Universe and in ourselves. The world in which we dwell is a wholly rational or law-ordered world. Reason in ourselves is the irrefutable witness to this fact; for it can only have been derived from the world around us and the experience of the race therein. The most advanced Evolutionists, even those of the school of Haeckel, assure us that our rational nature is but a reflection of the Universe in which we dwell. But, if so, the rational Universe which makes us rational, must itself have been constituted by a Reason prior to and above the Universe and ourselves.

Again, every man knows that he ought to speak the truth and do what is *right.* This conviction has been wrought into our nature in

the course of the evolution of our humanity, and is therefore a witness to the nature and will of the Power which has slowly made us what we are. And, once more, every man knows that the supreme law of his life is *Love.* Whether he obeys it or not, he knows that it is this that ought to command him. In this we have the highest revelation of God in ourselves, and a little reflection will show us that Reason, Righteousness, and Love, are *one.* These are not attributes of "matter," but of Spirit, answering to the revelation of spirit in ourselves. We are thus led to believe in God as the Infinite Spirit, the perfect Reason, Righteousness, and Love, *in whom* we live and move and have our being, who is also so far immanent in us all, both as the deepest principle and ideal of our life and by the influences of His Holy Spirit, which comes to us in its fulness in Jesus Christ. God is thus ever near us, and in some degree within us, seeking wholly to possess us and to make us His own—"one with Himself and with the whole." No man can deny that such a spirit so reaches him, moves within him, and claims him for its own.

2. Let me state next how we can reach belief in *Christ* as the Supreme revelation of God, His incarnation in the world, at once Divine and human, God and man, and therefore

the supreme medium of the Spirit of God to men.

We cannot do this by simply affirming "the miracle of the Incarnation." We cannot reach an intelligent and vital belief in the Incarnation in the old way, of supposing that at some moment of time God contracted His Being so as to be born a little child in Bethlehem. He did, in a very true sense, enter the world in that Child, but for the understanding of it we must go back to Eternity.

We can only reach the Divine and human Christ along the lines of the onward working of God *in our humanity*. Only thus can we get a Christ at once truly human and truly Divine. The highest revelation of God to us can only be given in our humanity, and it is in the humanity of Christ that we must perceive His Divinity. Since God is in Himself the perfect ethical Being, He can only become incarnate in our midst as the result of a *process* by means of which the ethical qualities of His Being become inwrought in our humanity. There are many to-day who cannot believe in "the miraculous," the most stupendous manifestation of which the Incarnation is supposed to be. But it is not really a question of the miraculous at all. Let the miracle be ever so firmly believed in, by no conceivable miracle

*merely* could a Divine *ethical* Being appear as a genuine human being, save as the consummation of an ethical process in humanity itself, beginning at the beginning and gradually realising itself. In affirming this we do not require to deny the miraculous. It may be true, or not. The point is that, not only do we not need to believe that a Divine Being in a moment of time reduced Himself to the limits of a human child, but we can see that the mere entrance of such a child into the world would not be the incarnation of that Eternal ethical Being that God is.

I must here bespeak the patient attention of those who may take this little book into their hands. We have reached a critical time with respect to the faith, and it is not without some earnest intellectual effort that we can hope to pass from the old way of viewing the Christian facts to that new mode of conceiving them which it seems imperative to adopt, if we would still hold a really vital faith in them. We cannot expect that such subjects can be set forth as with the facile and pictorial pen of the novelist, or that they can be grasped by the mind with the same ease as we take in the daily news of the world. The subject is serious, and if we would really know how, under the changed conditions of our thought

to-day, we can still confidently affirm the real, unique Incarnation of God in Christ, then we must be prepared to take a little trouble in the matter. It is well worth while.

We reach the Divine and human Christ along the lines of, not merely the physical, intellectual, and moral, but also of the *spiritual* development of humanity. God was never absent from the world. He never needed to enter it as if by an irruption into our humanity. He was always in some measure immanent in it. Its ideal from the first was none other than the realisation of Himself in finite (human) form. With the rise and progress of spiritual and ethical life in man, the real, actual immanence of God in our humanity was ever growing in fulness. God was in this way entering ever more and more fully into the life of man. It is really this increasing Divine entrance into our humanity — this growing Incarnation of God in human form—that *the Bible* bears witness to, and its culmination was reached in Christ. If the illustration will not be misunderstood, we may say,—just as the gain of the past on the intellectual side blossomed into a Plato, so that on the moral and spiritual side flowered in the Child that was born of Mary of Nazareth. It was therefore that Jesus was "the Child of the Holy

Spirit," and that He became the complete manifestation and incarnation of God in the world. His humanity was not *different* from ours, but it was ethically and spiritually full and complete. And, *as such*, that which was the Eternal Divine Ideal of our life appeared fully expressed in Him. The thought, "the Word," "the Eternal Life which was with the Father" as the Ideal and potency of the world, was "manifested in Him," so that His Apostles could say, "We have seen it and declare it unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us." In His complete oneness with God He was the revelation and incarnation, not only of the immanent Ideal, but of the transcendent Father, in a life of perfect Sonship, at once Divine and human.

Let me put it in this way. If the world be God's creation it must exist for the realisation of the Divine creative thought. But if God be the all-perfect Being, that thought cannot be less than the thought of *Himself* realised in finite form — in the form of Sonship towards Himself. It is *this* in God that is the Ideal of the world's life. It is the power of this Divine thought that is its life-principle and the potency of the world's development. And it is this that appears in its full truth in Christ. Therefore it is God *as Son* that we

behold at length fully incarnate in Jesus Christ, and it is for this reason that we speak of Sonship as well as of Fatherhood in God. That which was the deepest and the Divine principle of the world's life, stands declared in Him in whom it found its complete expression. It is the very same thing that we see (in, of course, a much less degree) in the seed that we sow in our gardens. The flower is ideally and potentially contained in the seed, and its nature is declared when we behold a perfect bloom.

In order to create, God must go out from Himself, so as to become the immanent principle of the world's life. It is *here* that we have the Divine self-limitation. That principle will gradually realise itself, as every life-principle does, whether in plant or animal or man, by a gradual process of development in an environment of transcendent influences, apart from which the development could not take place, any more than a plant could grow apart from the soil and the sunshine. Those transcendent influences which met the immanent in man and constantly tended to raise him, as they were responded to by him, were those which are described in biblical terms as the influences of *The Holy Spirit.* And, while Jesus represented in Himself

organically, the highest that had previously been reached by humanity, the *complete* incarnation of God in His Person and life was only realised through His life as it was lived in relation to God, the transcendent spiritual Father. In the complete self-sacrifice of the Cross, the complete Incarnation of God in man was manifested—Love which was truly infinite was declared. While, of course, the whole of the Infinite Deity cannot be incarnated in any finite form, the Holy Love, one with Truth and Righteousness, which God essentially is, *can* be so expressed, and was expressed in the Divine-human Christ.

I have used the phrase "the self-realisation of God," but it is not in the sense of the New Theology, as if God needed to realise Himself for the first time. On the contrary, it is in order to spread abroad His true and perfect life—to impart it to others caused to arise in His likeness; to gain for Himself sons and daughters innumerable, who shall share in the Divine life and blessedness. If we ask, why there should be a creation at all? the answer is, *Because God is Love.* Perfect Being is perfect Love, and just because God is such He cannot keep Himself to Himself, content in the blessedness of His perfect Being. The very nature of perfect love is to impart itself

to others, even though this involves, in one aspect, *sacrifice.* Thus God as the perfect Being is for ever giving Himself to be the life of His creation. But He is always, at the same time, and *in this very act,* maintaining His life as the perfect Love; and, while He becomes the immanent life-principle of the world, the world has its being in, and develops through the transcendent influences of, His all-environing Spirit. In Goethe's words: "He fosters nature in Himself, Himself in nature." In Jesus Christ, the immanent, as it has risen in man through the transcendent influences of the Holy Spirit, meets and is wholly one with the transcendent God and Father. Thus God is manifested as having proceeded from Himself into the creation, and as having again returned to Himself in the consummation. In Christ, therefore, we have *very God* in the truest sense conceivable—a being manifested in Time, but belonging to Eternity—true man arising out of Humanity, but as such also true God proceeding from God, the very source of humanity. He is the Son who can say, "I came forth from the Father and came into the world. Again I leave the world and go unto the Father." He came forth, not in a moment of time, but in eternity, "before the world was." It is no mere being

of time who can speak thus, but one who, as the incarnate Son, eternally in God, has realised the Divine life in the world in the form of man, has become the Head of a new Spiritual Humanity, "God and man in one person for ever." As such He becomes the source of those spiritual influences (of the Holy Spirit) which can raise all men into the life of Sonship that was realised and manifested in Himself.

3. The chief medium of the Divine transcendent saving influences is the *Cross* of Christ. Can we find a simple and satisfactory conception of the meaning of the Cross? This is what many are asking for at the present time. I have sought in Chapter XII. to set forth the significance of the Cross as it appeared immediately to Christ Himself. But the Cross has proved itself to be so many-sided, so truly *Divine*, that it is impossible to give a complete definition of it. This is just a proof of its Divineness; it touches human life and meets human need in countless ways. It has often, indeed, been wrongly viewed, just as the creation itself has been. But the mists are lifting, and we are coming to see the Cross as the necessary culmination of the life-work of Jesus. We are being led back to Himself for its explanation. If we come to Christ as He appears in the

Gospel pages, we shall be assured of one most illuminative truth: *the Cross was not intended to operate on God, but on man.* Its acceptance was God's appointment, God's will, *God's* sacrifice, God's great deed in time for man's salvation, revealing the Eternal Heart that is the centre of the universe and the Eternal Sacrifice of which Creation itself is a manifestation.

Christ came preaching the Kingdom of God, declaring the Divine forgiveness, pleading with men to believe the Gospel and become God's true sons and heirs. But it was all in vain, so far as the people were concerned. Sin was too deeply seated in the heart. One portion of the people were too oblivious of its reality, too well pleased with themselves and their legal righteousness; the others, who did realise their sinfulness, could not believe in the free Divine forgiveness that Jesus proclaimed. The holy life that was the condemnation of sin must perish. Jesus saw that *Death* awaited Him, instead of the throne of a spiritual Israel. It was God's will that He should accept it; it must therefore be necessary to bring in the Kingdom, or in other words to save men. He was "the Son of man," the Head and Representative of the people—of Humanity. He was sinless, and death had no claim upon Him. But it had a claim on the sinful Humanity which He

represented. For their sakes He would accept that Death, whatever it might involve, and it should be the means of saving them. I do not know that we are warranted in defining it, as it appeared to Christ, more closely than I have attempted to do. But we can see its Divine meaning and purpose from its effects. It convicted the self-righteous of their sinfulness; it led men to repentance; it enabled them to believe in the Divine forgiveness; it brought them into conscious reconciliation with God, and gave them "peace with God" within their souls; it kindled an answering love to God in their hearts; it lifted men and women out of the self-centred life into the life of love to all mankind. And it was always the Cross on which Christ died, in some real sense, *because of our sins and for our salvation.* The Cross thus proved itself to have an important function in that Divine moral order in the light of which all things must be viewed.

Regarded on the human side, the Crucifixion of Christ was, of course, an enormous crime. It could not therefore be something *instituted* by God. But Christ accepted it in the spirit of vicarious sacrifice as that which was really due to the sins of the people, and conscience (as represented by Paul, for example), interpreted what Christ there endured as being that which

was due to *sin*. The fact that Christ had to suffer as He did before God's Forgiveness could go forth to the world was regarded as a manifestation of the righteousness of God in view of sin. God thus over-ruled that culminating sin of man so as to make it an instrument for man's salvation. In so interpreting the Cross I believe that Paul and his fellow-apostles were taught by the Spirit.

Perhaps the question which, most of all, many wish for light on is, Why the Cross should be necessary at all in relation to Forgiveness when all the prophets and Christ Himself had declared the readiness of God to forgive repentant sinners? The answer to that question is, I believe, that the Christian Gospel which proceeds through the Cross is not merely that of God's readiness to forgive repentant sinners, but the announcement that God *does*—or *is* forgiving—the sins of men, that He is not only *willing* to forgive all who come to Him (like the father of the prodigal son in the parable), but that He comes in His Love in Christ actually seeking them, *declaring* His forgiveness through that Cross of His Son. It is meant to lead men to repentance. Just as in ordinary life we forgive an offender in our hearts before the announcement of it is made to him, so the Cross is the great proof and proclamation of

God's forgiveness of sinful men. But it had to go forth in that way, because otherwise sin would have seemed a light thing and so men could not have been really *saved*. As I have said, even the fully awakened conscience could not have taken to itself with confidence a mere announcement of forgiveness; while, if an announcement of God's forgiveness were not made, sinful men would not be brought to God as the Cross was designed to bring them. Thus, as Paul says, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, *not reckoning unto them their trespasses*," and this was possible because, "Him who knew no sin He made (to be) sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." In Christ *man* died representatively both *for* sin and *to* sin; in Christ man was made, ethically, completely at one with God; and Christ is able to conform to Himself all who receive Him as their Saviour. Therefore it is that in Him God can accept as His sons and heirs men as yet sinful in themselves—"justifying the ungodly" as Paul says. But it is the means of raising them out of their ungodliness into that same life that was realised in Christ and represented for all in Him. The Gospel is *wholly* of Grace, not of works at all; but it is the means of quickening men to true life and to all good works.

But in order to Salvation we do not need

to have consciously before us a *theory* of the Atonement. In order to feel its power we need only to stand reverently in the presence of that Cross. The Cross of the Sinless in a world of sin speaks for itself, and, in spite of all denials, it will continue to speak to the consciences and hearts of men. It is enough to believe that the Cross on which Christ "tasted death for every man" was the Divinely appointed means whereby God's forgiving Love went forth to men so as to save them from sin and self, and therefore also from the consequences of the merely self-centred life. It was a sacrifice that should bring home to the hearts of men both the reality of sin and the Divine Forgiveness.

4. The other Christian beliefs follow naturally and necessarily. If God cares for us like that, He must be all and more than any earthly father can be unto His children. As the source of our being He *is* our Father, and the ideal of our life is full participation in what He is,—in finite form, yet one with the infinite. If God cares for us, as the Cross of His Son declares, we have a real value to Him. Our destiny cannot be the merely earthly life which bodily dissolution brings to an end for all, and which must sometime come to an end for the whole of humanity. There would be no ultimate meaning in the creation, thus: that this is not so,

the Resurrection of Christ declares. I do not think that we are tied down to any particular theory of the Resurrection. That Christ was risen, the first disciples were sure,—*how* He rose is an interesting but an entirely subordinate question, which, like the Virgin-birth, we are not yet able to determine decisively. As risen He *lives*, and it is possible for us to come into such communion with Him as our Lord and Saviour, Teacher and Friend, as to be ourselves assured of the fact. And when once we are assured that Jesus Christ lives—"He who was dead and is alive for evermore," and know that in the Holy Spirit of God and of Christ we have God and Christ for ever with us "able to save to the uttermost," nothing, whether in life or in death, in time or eternity, need greatly trouble us. The only thing we need be anxious about is to "seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness," to try to cherish the Christ-spirit, to live the Christ-life, to labour so as to fulfil the Divine purpose of making all men God's true children, and of establishing His Kingdom in the world.

For a fuller statement of these subjects I must refer to my books: *Christian Theism and a Spiritual Monism; The Spirit and the Incarnation; The Cross and the Kingdom.* (T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh.)

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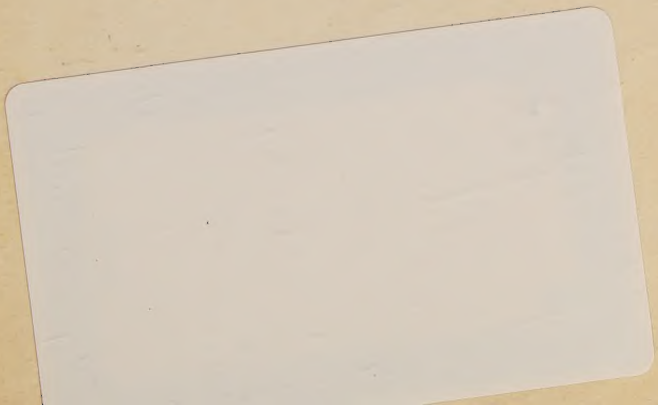

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